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## Xi advocates all-out effort to end poverty

President emphasizes meeting people's basic needs during his Chongqing visit

By **AN BAIJIE**  
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President Xi Jinping urged all-out efforts to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty in China within two years in his three-day inspection tour of Chongqing, which ended on Wednesday.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, presided over a meeting on Tuesday on guaranteeing the people's basic needs in food and clothing as well as access to education, medical care and safe housing.

Xi said food and clothing have been mostly guaranteed, while there remain some difficulties in access to education, medical care and safe housing.

Adding that poverty reduction work has entered a decisive stage, Xi instructed all departments to focus on the prominent problems of poverty alleviation and to make more contributions to building a moderately prosperous society in all respects.

According to China's plan, all of the country's rural impoverished people will be lifted out of poverty by 2020.

While talking with students and teachers on Monday at a primary school in Zhongyi, a township in the Shizhu Tujia autonomous county, Xi said compulsory education is an important part of poverty reduction.

Children in impoverished mountainous regions must be guaranteed access to education, and they should have a happy childhood, Xi said. He encouraged teachers to settle down in such regions, dedicate themselves to education in rural areas and contribute to poverty reduction.

At the home of poverty-stricken villager Tan Dengzhou, Xi asked about the life and health conditions of Tan and his wife, both of whom have had difficulties making a living due to injury and chronic diseases.

Xi said local authorities must pay great attention to people who are still poor and those who become poor due to illness. Authorities should improve measures on pensions, healthcare and medical alleviation to ensure people can escape

poverty, Xi said.

Upon learning that Party member Ma Peiqing had helped villagers earn money through planting traditional Chinese medicinal herbs, Xi said he was relieved to see the people lead a better life.

Xi told villagers that poverty reduction is his biggest concern and that his tour is to learn about remaining problems in poverty reduction.

Rural people should not be left behind while pursuing a moderately prosperous society in all respects, Xi said. The poor people's basic needs must be guaranteed along with the country's development, he said at Tuesday's meeting, adding that the poverty alleviation measures must reach every single person.

After getting out of poverty, rural people should still receive a lot of attention from the local government to make sure they stay out of poverty, Xi said, which he called important work.

Poverty reduction measures, such as building industries and offering training, should be used to ensure that people in impoverished areas have jobs, he said.

Party committee secretaries and heads in poverty-stricken counties should remain steadfast in their posts to guarantee that poverty alleviation policies are stable and sustainable, Xi said.

Xi said that officials should practice clean governance and those found to cheat in poverty reduction work should be held accountable.

On Wednesday morning, Xi was briefed by the Party committee and municipal government of Chongqing. He encouraged local authorities to play a model role in jointly building the Belt and Road and promoting the green development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt.

The CPC Central Committee's decision to develop the western region is very significant, Xi said. He added that Chongqing should give manufacturing a more prominent place and take a leading role in boosting opening-up in the country's western areas.

Xi also highlighted the importance of the Party's political building, saying strong measures to fight corruption must be maintained.

## Stabilizing still urged as GDP beats forecasts in Q1

By **XIN ZHIMING**  
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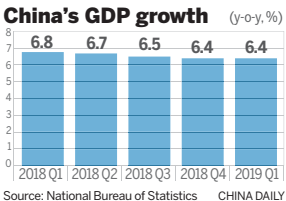
China's economy grew at a faster-than-expected 6.4 percent year-on-year in the first quarter, matching the rate from the fourth quarter of last year, the National Bureau of Statistics said on Wednesday.

Economists said that upbeat readings that were issued bode well for the country to achieve its GDP growth target for the year of between 6 and 6.5 percent, but they cautioned that authorities need to take more measures to ensure that the stable growth trend will be sustained.

China's industrial output was up in the first quarter by 6.5 percent year-on-year, compared with 5.7 percent in the previous quarter, official said.

Fixed-asset investment growth was 6.3 percent in the first quarter, compared with 6.1 percent in the first two months, according to the NBS.

Retail sales increased by 8.3 per-



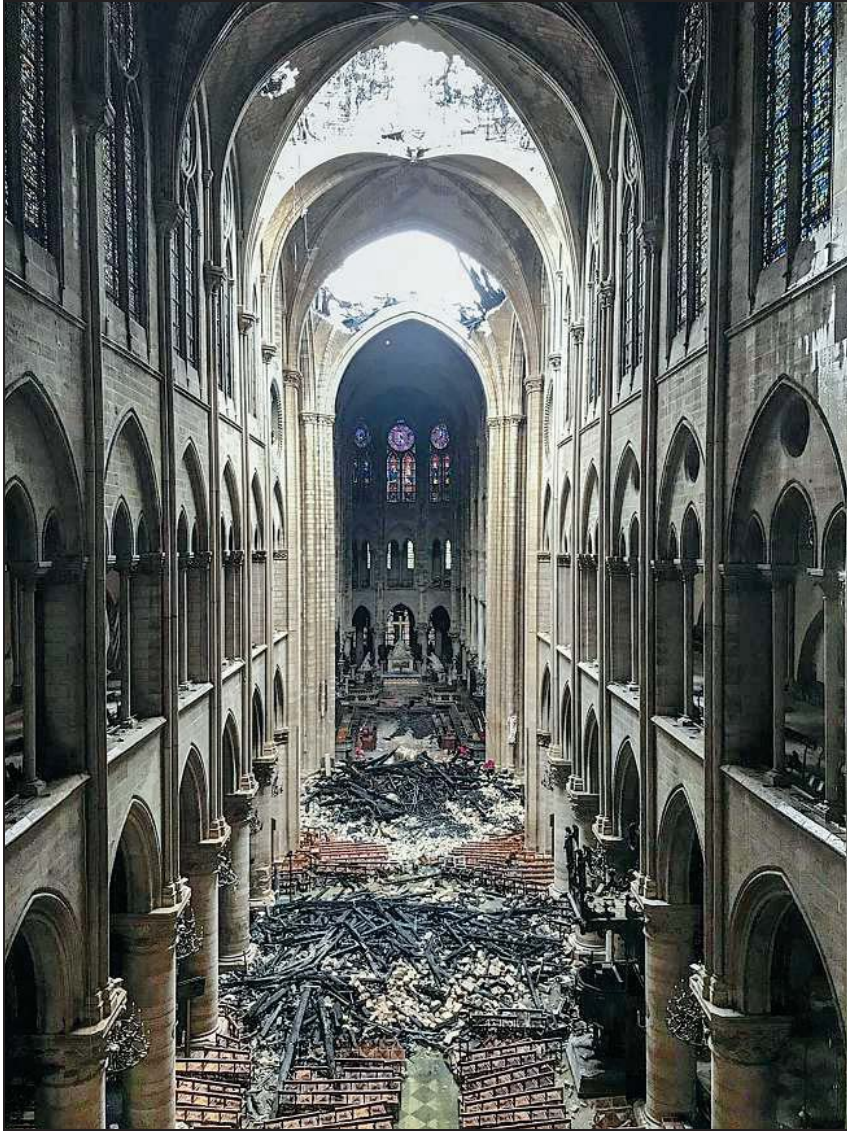
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cent year-on-year in the same period.

"The national economy saw stable performance with growing positive factors and stronger market expectations and confidence, sustaining the momentum of progress in overall stability," Mao Shengyong, an NBS spokesman, said at a news conference.

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The interior of the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris is littered with scorched wood on Tuesday. AFP

## Paris fire sends alarm on relics protection

By **WANG KAIHAO**  
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An inferno that destroyed the spire and a large portion of the wooden roof structure of the 12th-century Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris on Monday reinforced a cautionary message to Chinese authorities about the need to better protect vulnerable heritage sites.

The National Cultural Heritage Administration held a staff meeting on Tuesday night at which officials discussed the Paris fire and six major fires that have taken place at Chinese cultural heritage sites this year.

"The fire at Notre Dame in Paris rang the warning bell for us," Song Xinchao, deputy director of the administration, said in an interview on Tuesday.

"The safety of cultural heritage sites is a red line that can never be crossed. It's a global issue," he said.

The six fires were in Sichuan, Fujian, Jiangxi, and Zhejiang provinces, officials said.



Consultant Patrick Palern (right) checks statues saved just before Monday's fire by removal from Notre Dame's spire for restoration in Marsac-sur-L'Isle, France, on Tuesday. REGIS DUVIGNAU / REUTERS

On Jan 6, a hall at Yunyan Temple in Jiangyou, Sichuan province, burned down. On Feb 2, a wooden family temple from the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) in Nanchang, Jiangxi, was destroyed by fire.

The most recent incident was Saturday in Jinjiang, Fujian, when the late Qing Dynasty residence of

Wu Lu, the province's last *zhuangyuan* (top scorer on imperial examinations), was damaged.

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### Inside

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## San Diego pandas heading back to China

By **LIU YINMENG**  
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Garrett Sheetz has always seen giant pandas in picture books, but never in real life, so he was more than thrilled when his parents drove six hours from their home in San Jose, California, to the San Diego Zoo to see the chubby bears up close.

"I like best how I get to see them in real life," the 7-year-old said on Friday as he and his family sat outside a photo booth in the Panda Canyon at the zoo, waiting patiently for staff to print photos of them and the pandas.

Garrett's encounter with the cuddly creatures turned out to be timely. This spring, the zoo's two last

remaining pandas, 27-year-old Baiyun and her 6-year-old son, Xiao Liwu, are heading back to China as the zoo's landmark conservation loan agreement with Beijing comes to an end.

Decades ago, the zoo joined the China Wildlife Conservation Association, the China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and others in an effort to prevent pandas from going extinct.

The collaboration resulted in Baiyun and her partner, Shi Shi, arriving by jet in San Diego from Wolong Panda Preserve in China in 1996. Since then, the beloved bears, including Gao Gao, Baiyun's second mate, and Baiyun's cubs, have contributed significantly to scientists' study of panda biology and behavior.



Good luck tokens for the giant pandas are posted on April 6 at the San Diego Zoo. LI YING / XINHUA

"We have thousands and thousands of people coming to the zoo to see our pandas," said Kathy Hawk, senior mammal keeper at the San Diego Zoo, who has been with the animals since they made the trip from China.

When the pandas first arrived in San Diego, the species was on the

## TAX CUTS POISED TO BOOST PRIVATE BUSINESSES

Government makes renewed commitment to sector

By **ANDREW MOODY**  
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Shu Wenbin is one of the millions of private business entrepreneurs in China set to benefit from large-scale tax cuts that take effect this month.

The 33-year-old general manager of Continental Interior Design and Construction in Beijing said he thinks the 2 trillion yuan (\$299 billion) in cuts to taxes and fees, outlined in the Government Work Report on March 5, many of them targeted at small and micro businesses, will give his company a major boost.

"We will fully feel the strength of the tax reduction. This is a policy that benefits enterprises and the people as well. We will invest the money we save in the development of the company and its operations," he said.



The tax cuts are a result of the government's renewed commitment to the private sector, officials said.

President Xi Jinping declared his unwavering support for the sector at a symposium on private enterprise at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Nov 1.

"On the new journey to complete the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects, (the) private sector should only grow stronger instead of being weakened," he told those attending the event.

Yet the scale of the cuts announced in the Government Work Report surprised many business observers.

The reductions represent more than 2 percent of China's GDP and more than the individual economies of countries such as Bangladesh, Vietnam, Egypt, Finland or Chile, according to their 2018 nominal GDP rankings by the International Monetary Fund.

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verge of extinction, the zoo said. Decades of conservation efforts by scientists have helped bring the wild panda population in China to nearly 2,000.

Hawk said that by working together, US and Chinese researchers were able to learn more about the giant panda's biology and behavior. "What we've learned from them will help them in the wild," she said.

It's not clear at this point when pandas will live at the zoo again, but the staff said they are working with their Chinese colleagues to determine what's next.

"Currently, our director and our executive team are in discussions with the Chinese right now, working out a future research permit at this time," she added.

Panda lovers have until April 27 to see them at the zoo, and many have traveled from all over the state for a last look at the black-and-white bamboo eaters.

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Cuts: Scale surprises observers

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The biggest change comes in valued added tax where the rate for manufacturing businesses is being reduced from 16 to 13 percent.

For most other sectors, including transportation and construction, the rate is being cut from 10 to 9 percent.

There are also major reductions in corporate income tax charged against profits. The rate for businesses with a turnover of less than 1 million yuan is being halved from 10 percent to 5 percent, while that for companies with a turnover of less than 3 million yuan is 10 percent minus 50,000 yuan.

On March 21, Premier Li Keqiang visited the Ministry of Finance and the State Taxation Administration to check on preparations for the introduction of the cuts.

Continental Interior Design and Construction, which was founded in 2008, employs 100 people and works mainly for corporate clients, will benefit from the fall in the VAT rate from 10 to 9 percent, and it will also be boosted by many of its suppliers enjoying a 3 percent cut.

Shu said he will invest the tax savings in three main areas: staff training, particularly in project management; the development of new products; and seeking new markets on the outskirts of Beijing and in South and Southwest China.

“The policies clearly demonstrate the government’s commitment to the private sector and its willingness to help businesses like ours. We believe it is a very innovative approach,” Shu added.

Russell Brown, managing partner of Lehman Brown, an accountancy firm in Beijing, and a former chairman of the British Chamber of Commerce in China, said tax rates on the Chinese mainland were now competitive with those in Hong Kong.

The corporate income tax rate in the special administrative region is 8.2 percent for companies with a turnover of less than HK\$2 million (\$255,000).

“These are now very competitive rates that should benefit the economy overall. They should also lead to less tax avoidance, and so there may not be a reduction in the overall tax take in the longer term,” he said.

Zhu Tian, professor of economics at the China Europe International Business School in Shanghai, also believes the cuts will lead to less tax evasion.

“If you lower tax rates, companies are more likely to truthfully state their income. The VAT cut is the most significant because it is an important tax source in China and is hard to evade.”

Debate about the importance of the private sector to the Chinese economy heightened at the end of last year.

President Xi made clear on a visit to Liaoning province in September that both State-owned enterprises and private businesses are vital.

He said it was wrong to disparage SOEs and that the private sector, which has been beset with funding difficulties and a lack of available finance, needed the government’s “care and support.”

Tax cuts for private businesses have been very much part of the government’s agenda since 2012, when a pilot program to replace business tax with VAT was introduced in Shanghai.

The government also made reductions to VAT in May, cutting that which applied to the manufacturing sector from 17 to 16 percent and to the transportation and construction sectors from 11 to 10 percent.

According to the State Administration of Taxation, VAT cuts amounted to 270 billion yuan between May and December, with the manufacturing sector enjoying 35 percent of the benefits.

Fresh optimism among private businesses was also reflected in a survey released on April 9.

Some 71 percent of Chinese businesses interviewed in the CPA Australia Asia-Pacific Small Business Survey expect to grow this year, compared with the regional average of 68 percent.

The proportion was significantly higher than those for Singapore and Australia, where expansion of



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

60 percent and 48 percent, respectively, is expected by private businesses.

Zhu, at the China Europe International Business School, believes the VAT cuts will be a major boost to small businesses.

He said the reductions will lower companies’ costs and increase demand for their products because they will be cheaper.

“There is both a demand and supply effect. Much of the reduction is going to be all profit for companies,” he said.

Zhu said tax cuts are a very effective way of boosting the economy.

“Tax cuts are a supply-side stimulus. If the profits rise, you stimulate investment and you give companies more confidence in the future, so they invest,” he added.

Stephen Roach, senior fellow at Yale University’s Jackson Institute for Global Affairs, said the tax cuts should ease the pressure on small companies that faced funding difficulties at the end of last year after the government tightened credit to reduce debt in the economy.

Many small and medium-sized companies have been at the forefront of deleveraging pressures because of the squeeze on shadow banking in particular, he said.

Roach, a former Asia head of investment bank Morgan Stanley, did not think the cuts would be of huge benefit to high-technology businesses in the new economy, as they were already generating healthy cash flows.

Much of the new economy is growing very rapidly, generating huge increases in cash flow, so it does not rely on external funding and has less of a need for any stimulus, he said.

The cuts will not only benefit domestic companies but also those from overseas.

Massimo Bagnasco, managing

“The policies clearly demonstrate the government’s commitment to the private sector and its willingness to help businesses like ours. We believe it is a very innovative approach.”

Shu Wenbin, private business entrepreneur

“There is both a demand and supply effect. Much of the reduction is going to be all profit for companies.”

Zhu Tian, professor of economics at the China Europe International Business School in Shanghai

partner of Progetto CMR (Beijing) Architectural Design Consultants, part of a leading Italian architectural company, said the reductions would provide a boost.

“It is definitely a positive action which will support small businesses,” he said, adding that the VAT reduction would definitely help some companies.

Bagnasco said foreign companies in particular want to see improvements in other aspects of the business environment in China, not just tax cuts.

“One of the key issues for small and medium-sized enterprises, especially foreign ones, is better access to financing. Another major issue is ensuring reasonable payment terms. There is currently no consolidated legislation in China on late payment, which would alleviate many cash flow burdens SMEs have in China,” he added.

Edward Tse, founder and CEO of management consultancy Gao Feng Advisory, said the cut in VAT in particular would ease the pressures on small businesses.

“It is a highly welcome policy change. It has to be seen as a very good signal from the government. The corporate sector has been making the case for many years that taxes should be substantially reduced, and the government has now responded,” he said.

“Companies will either use the money they save to pay dividends or reinvest in their business, some of which will be in research and development, which can only be positive for the economy.”

Charles-Edouard Bouee, CEO of management consultancy Roland Berger, also believes the tax cuts will ease some of the financial pressures that small businesses in China have been facing.

“I think they are significant and this is a good effort by the govern-

ment,” he said.

Bouee, who has written extensively about the Chinese economy, said that regardless of tax cuts, the country’s private sector is now one of the most vibrant in the world.

“It is much more entrepreneurial than Europe and is much more similar to that in the United States. The world has changed a lot in the past 10 years, and what Chinese businesses have been able to do, whether they are in the tech sector or not, is adapt to new technology,” he said.

Zhu Ning, deputy dean at the National Institute of Financial Research at Tsinghua University, said the tax cuts are addressing the slump in business confidence at the end of last year.

“Many companies — particularly export-oriented manufacturing businesses in Zhejiang province — found they were not making enough profit, and some of them closed down. This sector suddenly lost the confidence it had built up over decades,” he said.

“The tax cuts represent a new incentive and I expect we are going to see this policy continue with cuts targeting new sectors such as artificial intelligence and high-end manufacturing.”

For Shu, at Continental Interior Design and Construction, the cuts show the government is unequivocally on the side of small businesses.

“I am encouraged by the care and attention the Party and the government is offering the private sector. It only enhances my passion and confidence in running a business and developing innovation for the good of the nation,” he said.

“Our company and myself, as an individual, are confident and willing to contribute to the great journey of this new era.”

Chen Yingqun contributed to this story.

Poorer areas to benefit, says online business operator

By ANDREW MOODY

Tax cuts will not just benefit small businesses in vibrant centers such as Shanghai and Shen-zhen, Guangdong province, but some of the poorer areas of the country as well, according to Liang Qianjuan.

The 32-year-old runs Longshan Zhuangyuan, an online store in Longnan, a small village in Gansu province, on which she sells local produce such as honey, dried long beans, almonds and eggs to customers nationwide.

“Tax and fee cuts will release money to greatly improve the daily production and profit margins of the enterprise,” she said.

“Primarily, we will use the money we save to invest in new product development and to increase payments to farmers.”

Zhang Haibo, president of the High People’s Court of Gansu, who speaks on small business issues, said the cuts are very important to the local economy.

He said the province plans to reduce taxes for its small and microbusinesses, in addition to 347 million yuan (\$51.7 million) in reductions last year.

“Private business is strongly related to the economy of the whole province. If private business thrives, then the economy of Gansu will be strong.”

Zhang Haibo, president of the High People’s Court of Gansu

347 million yuan

amount of reductions in taxes for small and microbusinesses in Gansu last year

“We listen to enterprises, and directly try to address their problems and solve their difficulties,” he said.

“Private business is strongly related to the economy of the whole province. If private business thrives, then the economy of Gansu will be strong.”

Zhang said the provincial government is trying to be as proactive as possible in developing the small business sector.

“We listen to enterprises, directly face their problems and try to solve them,” he said.

Zhang, who is a deputy to the National People’s Congress, the nation’s top legislative body, went to Guangdong as a migrant worker after finishing middle school.

While working in the southern province she developed computer skills and decided to return home to Gansu to set up an e-commerce business.

She is part of a broader trend of rural residents using e-commerce platforms to sell agricultural produce.

According to the Ministry of Commerce, online sales of agricultural produce increased by 33.8 percent last year to 230.5 billion yuan.

Zhang said the latest tax cuts are likely to have a feel-good effect, making businesses realize that the government is on their side.

Wang Ziwei, Ma Si and Ma Jingma contributed to this story.

# TOP NEWS

## Study links higher farm income, ecological gains

By PAUL WELITZKIN in New York  
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Rubber has always been a key commodity in Hainan, China's southernmost province and an island known for its tropical climate, beach resorts and forested interior. Hainan's rubber plantations have been expanding to supply material for tires in China's booming auto market, now the largest in the world. While providing jobs and income, the rubber production surge has also resulted in an extensive loss of the island's natural forest coverage, helping deplete a resource that helps in soil retention and flood mitigation. Rubber's ancillary effects also pose a danger to the island's coral reefs — a key tourist attraction.

A recent study, which pooled the work of researchers from Stanford University, Canada's McGill University and the Chinese Academy of Sciences, showed that farmers and operators who took environmental concerns into account doubled their incomes while reducing their reliance on a single harvest.

It's an approach that also produced environmental benefits for the land and could help farmers worldwide protect not only the environment, but their livelihoods as well.

In 2010, Gretchen Daily, director of the Stanford Natural Capital Project and a professor at Stanford University, arrived in Hainan.

"At that time (Hainan), had experienced its worst flooding in 50 years," Daily said. "There were also problems with infrastructure like roads and the island's fishing industry. With that vulnerability in mind, we set out to see what could reverse the rapid deforestation that was happening on the island."

Rubber production on Hainan was an example of monoculture farming, the agricultural practice of producing or growing a single crop, which maximizes crop yield. "Twentieth-century monoculture farms greatly increased agricultural production, but at a huge price," she said.

Researchers looked at land use

and land-cover changes in Hainan over a 19-year period of rubber plantation growth.

In particular, they looked at one key land management change: a technique called intercropping that involves cultivating other valuable plants in addition to a main crop.

Daily and the researchers came up with the idea of planting crops like areca nuts and other high-value products in the space between the rubber tree trunks on Hainan. "Adding in other crops besides rubber helped to diversify and improve farm income (many of the crops had a higher profit margin than rubber) and also reduced the environmental risks from converting the island's forests to produce rubber," Daily said.

Zheng Hua, of the Research Center for Eco-Environmental Sciences at the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing, was the lead author in the study. Zheng said that initially many of the rubber farmers were reluctant to plant the new crops.

"The main reason why they were skeptical of implementing them is the market price changes. The market price of agricultural products (like rubber) is one of the main factors influencing rural household livelihoods. For example, the price of rubber in 2006 was 20 yuan (\$3) per kilogram. However, in 2017, the price was about 8 yuan per kg," Zheng said.

Daily also said rubber farmers were concerned that the additional crops would take away nutrients from the soil and "diminish the productivity of the rubber trees".

Those fears proved to be unfounded, said Daily, as rubber production was equal to the yield before the additional crops were added. "Farmer income doubled because these were high-margin crops."

The environmental benefits include less sediment runoff, better flood control and a reduction in pollution runoff that was going into drinking water supplies, said Daily. All of this also reduced the stress on the coastal areas and the coral reefs to help the tourism industry on the island.

## Life in the fast lane



A student gives it his all during a relay race at a middle school sporting event in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region on Wednesday. HUANG XIAOBANG / XINHUA

## Relics: Wooden frame a risk

From page 1

Fire this year also destroyed a bridge dating from four centuries ago in Nanping, Fujian, a Qing Dynasty residence in Wenzhou, Zhejiang, and an office structure from the 1930s in Fuzhou, Jiangxi.

The operators of the sites hit by fire will be responsible for the damage, said the heritage administration. "Electrical faults and loose supervision over the use of fire during renovation are the main reasons" for the damage, the administration's statement said.

Though the fire at Notre Dame is under investigation, French officials said they suspect its source might have been related to restoration work on the cathedral.

"A large number of Chinese cultural heritage sites are being restored as well. We have no room for even the slightest error," Song said.

Liu Qingzhu, a cultural heritage expert at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said, "In ancient times, thunderstorms were the biggest threats for wooden architecture. They became much safer after lighting rods were widely installed. However, the use of electricity in restorations has created a new problem."

Unlike the stone structures of much ancient architecture in the West, wood was the primary building material in ancient China. "If a fire similar to the one at Notre Dame in Paris happened at a Chinese building, the whole building would probably burn down," Liu said.

Hours after the fire in Paris, the Palace Museum in Beijing, China's former imperial palace from 1420 to 1911 and also known as the Forbidden City, held an emergency meeting to go over its fire-prevention efforts. It is the world's biggest architectural complex made of wood.

The museum has some 50 fire-fighters on duty around the clock, a fire engine, over 160 hydrants, thousand of extinguishers, and fire walls, officials said last year.

But not all relics have such rigid supervision. A joint comprehensive survey was started in September by the administration and the Ministry of Emergency Management. It found that 33 major institutions still don't meet standards, and the State Council issued a notice on Wednesday that they were to receive the highest-level supervision.

On Tuesday, the administration urged local governments to immediately launch evaluations of potential hazards.

## Shipshape



The Chinese Navy Museum in Qingdao, Shandong province, draws visitors from across the country as this year marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army Navy. LI ZIHENG / XINHUA

# Premier vows to cut costs for small firms

## State Council meeting works to bring down financing burdens on enterprises

By ZHANG YUE  
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China will work harder to ensure financing costs faced by micro and small enterprises are further reduced, with a target of making outstanding loans to these firms approved by the five large State-owned commercial banks increase by over 30 percent this year, a State Council executive meeting chaired by Premier Li Keqiang decided on Wednesday.

"Lowering these enterprises' financing costs is a pressing issue in our economy today. Our prudent monetary policy should be eased or tightened to the right degree to keep liquidity reasonably sufficient. We need to exercise well-timed regulation rather than flood the economy with stimulus measures," Li said.

It was decided at the meeting that the government must make flexible use of various monetary policy instruments. A policy framework for

applying a fairly low reserve requirement ratio for small and medium-sized banks will be established.

The scale of re-lending and rediscount will be expanded and more targeted cuts in the reserve ratio for small and medium-sized banks will be made. Funds that are freed up through these measures will be used for lending to private companies and to micro and small enterprises.

Bond financing support instruments will be promoted to determine that the scale of both bond financing by private firms and special bonds issued by financial institutions for such enterprises exceeds 2018 levels.

Banks need to improve their evaluation mechanisms to strengthen confidence, readiness and capacity in their lending to such enterprises, it was urged at the meeting. The government will support banks in formulating inclusive financing plans dedicated to these enterprises and guide banks toward proper

interest rate determination.

All these measures are designed to ensure that the balance of loans extended to micro and small enterprises by the five State-owned commercial banks — Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, Agricultural Bank of China, Bank of China, China Construction Bank and Bank of Communications — increases by over 30 percent this year, and the overall financing costs for micro and small enterprises will be trimmed by another 1 percentage point over last year.

"We must resolutely bring down the financing costs for micro and small enterprises. This is a crucial task in promoting economic development as it helps lift employment and contributes to the healthy and steady growth of private companies," Li said.

The central government will continue to allocate funds to incentivize reductions in financing fees faced by micro and small enterprises. The State Financing Guarantee Fund will support no less than 200 billion yuan (\$30 billion) of guaranteed loans to at least 100,000 micro and small enterprises this year.

# Primate genetic research approved

By ZHANG ZHIHAO  
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Experiments conducted by Chinese scientists to test brain development of monkeys carrying human gene copies have received ethical approval, and the scientific work complies with international animal welfare standards, according to a Chinese research institute.

The study involves 11 rhesus macaque monkeys carrying copies of the human MCPH1 gene introduced into the monkeys in the embryonic phase. Scientists believe the gene is crucial for human brain development and evolution. The project began in 2010 and was led by researchers from the Kunming Institute of Zoology, under the Chinese Academy of Sciences, who collaborated with researchers from the University of North Carolina.

The monkeys carrying human genes performed better on short-term memory tests and also have faster reaction times compared with the control group, according to the findings published on March 27 in the China-based journal National Science Review.

The paper said the research is beneficial to understanding the origin and evolution of mankind's central nervous system and will help develop treatments for brain abnormalities such as autism.

Su Bing, a geneticist at the institute and one of the lead scientists in the study, said that of the 11 transgenic monkeys, five were designed to survive only into the fetal stage in order to study their in utero brain development patterns.

Of the six monkeys born, one died two months after birth for unknown reasons, and the rest have remained healthy, Su told Chi-



These rhesus macaque twins were implanted with a human gene in Yunnan province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

na Daily on Wednesday, adding that they did not find evidence that the gene implant caused the death.

Due to the limited sample size, he said they will need to create more transgenic monkeys and apply new research tools and analytical methods to better understand the effect of the MCPH1 gene on brain development and cognition.

However, the experiment has divided the scientific community, with some scientists criticizing it as unethical. Some even speculated that it could lead to a *Planet of the Apes*-type scenario in which humanity clashes with genetically enhanced intelligent primates.

"It is necessary for scientists to care about animal welfare and ethics, but speculation is often irresponsible and untrue," he said. "While monkeys and humans have similar genomes, there are still tens of millions of genetic differences. Changing one gene carefully designed for research will not result in drastic change."

Though arguments can be made against genetically modifying apes, which are more genetically similar to humans than monkeys, "scientists agree that monkey models are at times irreplaceable for basic research, especially in studying

human physiology, cognition and disease", Su said.

In 2008, US scientists created transgenic macaque monkeys carrying the human Huntington's disease gene to understand the condition and possibly identify a new form of treatment for this incurable genetic disorder.

In 2009, Japanese scientists created the world's first transgenic marmosets, a small monkey native to Brazil, that used a gene to make the animals' skin glow a fluorescent green. Scientists said the research could open new prospects for medical research.

"China has also made great strides in life science related to nonhuman primates ... thanks to strong government support and effective use of its monkey breeding and research facilities," Su said.

The institute told China Daily that the ethical justification for Su's experiments received approval in 2010. The institute has also earned accreditation from the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care, an international nonprofit organization that promotes the humane treatment of animals in science.

In 2015, the animal ethics committee of Kunming Biomed International, a research organization specializing in nonhuman primates, also declared that the animals were being treated humanely in every step of the experiments, and in accordance with domestic and international regulations, the statement said.

In 2017, the institute's bioethics review committee again evaluated and approved the experiments before applying for funds from the National Natural Science Foundation of China, with the project gaining the foundation's support.

## Vatican to attend expo in Beijing

By ZHOU JIN  
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China confirmed on Wednesday that the Vatican will attend the Beijing International Horticultural Exhibition, which begins later this month, as the two countries work to improve bilateral ties.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said at a news conference that Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, president of the Pontifical Council for Culture, would attend the expo at the invitation of the event's organizing committee.

The Vatican will have a 200-square-meter pavilion at the expo to be held from April 29 to Oct 7, according to a news release from the Holy See Press Office.

AsiaNews, an official news agency of the Roman Catholic Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions, quoted acting Holy See Press Office director Alessandro Gisotti as saying that this will be the first time that the Vatican officially participates in the expo.

It also quoted Ravasi as saying that "what will happen during the expo will be a different kind of dialogue, purely cultural, and its task is to create an atmosphere in which it is possible to speak a little more about possible exchanges, not only in the religious sphere, but also in the fields of art, culture and scientific research".

China and the Vatican have maintained contact following the signing of a provisional agreement on the appointment of bishops in September, and the two countries are working hard to improve bilateral relations, Lu said.

The ministry has repeated many times that it is sincere about boosting ties with the Vatican.

According to Lu, the Beijing expo is the world's most prestigious horticultural exhibition and more than 110 countries and international organizations have confirmed their attendance at the event.

"We hope to work with the participants to promote green development through the expo," he added.

# Growth: Sustainable recovery key for economy in near future

From page 1

At the next stage, the country's economic policies must be implemented thoroughly to ensure the trend of stable growth is reinforced, Mao said.

Economists said the sound performance in the first quarter has changed market expectations. "It reflects the great resilience and stability of the Chinese economy," said Wang Jun of the China Center for International Economic Exchanges.

Compared with the first quarter of last year, however, major economic indicators all eased by varying levels.

"While real GDP growth remained unchanged in the first quarter compared with the last quarter of last year, if we look at nominal growth figures, growth eased from 9.15 percent in the fourth quarter of 2018 to 7.84 percent," said Xu Qiyuan, an economist at the Institute of World Economics and Politics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

Changes in the nominal figures show that the economy has yet to bottom out but it is already close to a trough, he said.

The growth recovery, so far mainly driven by property investment and production of construction materials, may not be sustainable, and a full, broad-based recovery has yet to come, economists at Nomura Securities said in a research note, warning that could even be a "double dip" in the near term.

"Policymakers might still need to continue their easing stance for a while," it said.

To keep the economy on track, China should adhere to its proactive fiscal policy and prudent monetary policy and properly handle its countercyclical policymaking, said Wang.

# CHINA

## Pork prices expected to rise sharply

Swine fever hurt supply, but govt says farmers can now increase their profits

By WANG XIAODONG  
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The price of pork, a staple in China, may jump significantly in the latter half of this year, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said on Wednesday, urging pig farmers to increase their stock. Pork prices have been declining since the first African swine fever outbreak in August, but have started to rebound since February, Tang Ke, chief of markets and information at the ministry, said at a news conference.

In March, the average wholesale pork price in China was about 19 yuan (\$2.80) per kilogram, a rise of 6.3 percent from the previous month, and a rise of 7.6 percent from March last year, he said.

In the latter half of the year, Tang said, prices could be more than 70 percent higher than in the previous year.

Because of African swine fever outbreaks in recent months that have hit almost all regions in China, the number of pigs declined by more than 18 percent in March, year-on-year, while the number of female pigs for reproductive use declined by 21 percent, the biggest decline of the past decade, Tang said.

The reduced production capacity means prices can be expected to continue rising in the second quarter, he said.

“A further decline in pig stocks in the latter half of the year, coupled with the arrival of peak season for pork consumption, the price of pork is likely to see a rapid rise,” Tang said. “We suggest pig farmers increase production and pay attention to disease control and prevention to earn higher profits. The measures will also help stabilize pork prices and meet market demand.”

“We suggest pig farmers increase production and pay attention to disease control and prevention to earn higher profits. The measures will also help stabilize pork prices and meet market demand.”

Tang Ke, chief of markets and information at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs

China reported 122 African swine fever outbreaks in 30 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities as of April 8. Since the country's first outbreak of the disease in Shenyang, Liaoning province, in August, more than 1 million pigs have been slaughtered to control its spread, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

Quarantine measures have been lifted in areas involved in 108 of the outbreaks, and the production and supply of pork remain stable in general, Han Changfu, minister of agriculture and rural affairs, said last week.

African swine fever is fatal to pigs but does not harm humans. China is the world's largest producer and consumer of pork, producing about half of the world's total.

Zhu Zengyong, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, said that because fewer pigs are being raised the production of pork this year may drop by as much as 10 percent.

## Yi ethnic tradition



Dancers perform at a ceremony on Wednesday in Dafang county of Bijie, Guizhou province, as part of the Chinese Yi ethnic tradition of offering sacrifice to the gods of water. The activity is designed to educate and guide the next generation to protect and revere the environment. LUO DAFU / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Travel agencies adjust itineraries in aftermath of Notre Dame fire

By CHENG SI  
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While the world watches the aftermath of the fire in Notre Dame cathedral in Paris, travel agencies moved quickly to alter the itineraries for tourists who had planned to visit the iconic building.

According to Ctrip, an online travel agency based in Shanghai, tourists who booked a Notre Dame visit were informed of the blaze and offered free cancellations.

Zou Yu, director of Ctrip's European market, said the previously set schedule for group and self-guided travelers to visit Notre Dame changed to Sacre-Coeur Basilica, another heavily visited structure in Paris.

She said the agency will also offer cruises on the Seine River to compensate travelers who were unable to see Notre Dame.

Also, a message notifying travelers of the fire is shown on the agency's website to persuade them to stay away for safety reasons.

Liu Yang, a 28-year-old from Beijing, was astonished when she heard

“It was like a bolt out of the blue. I am a fan of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and dreamed of visiting the cathedral with my husband. Now, it's ruined.”

Wang Jing, 29, from Beijing

the Gothic church had burned.

“I visited the cathedral just last month,” she said. “I can't believe the tragedy happened to this gorgeous landmark. If I had another chance, I would cherish every moment staying with the beautiful lady.”

Xu Xiaolei, chief branding officer at Aoyou, an online travel agency under China CYTS Tour in Beijing, said the blaze brought great loss to the world. He said Notre Dame is a must-see attraction for most travel-

ers going to France.

Wang Jing, a 29-year-old from Beijing, was distressed over the news, as she and her husband had planned to spend their honeymoon in Paris in June.

“It was like a bolt out of the blue. I am a fan of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and dreamed of visiting the cathedral with my husband. Now, it's ruined,” she said.

According to a report by the China Tourism Academy focusing on outbound tourism to Europe in February, France was among the 10 hottest destinations in Europe for Chinese travelers last year.

Data from Ctrip indicate that, so far in April, the number of travelers who reserved trips to France rose 50 percent from the same period last month, and that Notre Dame is among the three most-visited attractions for Chinese visitors.

Built in the 12th and 13th centuries, Notre Dame sits on a small island in the Seine named Ile de la Cite in Paris, and is seen as one of the finest examples of French Gothic architecture and the landmark of Paris.

## Capital to serve up late-night dining

By DU JUAN  
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Beijing will establish 10 areas for late-night dining by the end of 2021 to meet the growing needs of the public, authorities said on Wednesday.

Yan Ligang, head of Beijing's Commerce Bureau, said consumers are requiring a higher level of services, and upgrading the sector is essential to the capital's high-quality development.

Under the plan, authorities will encourage the dining industry to be greener and more regulated.

“People's desire for late-night dining has increased in recent years,” the plan said. “Breakfast services will also be improved by the end of 2021, with a target of

establishing more than 300 fixed stores.”

Li Xinlei, a 25-year-old white-collar worker in Chaoyang district, said she frequently goes to a late-night dining block with dozens of restaurants called the 21 Block at the Hopson One shopping mall near the East Fourth Ring Road.

“Night life starts at 9 pm with delicious food and drinks,” she said. “I'm happy that we have such a place to relax and enjoy the food at night. My friends and I often go there after work.”

In addition, the government will upgrade barrier-free facilities in all shopping centers to ensure that 90 percent of the city's shopping areas provide full service for disabled people by 2021.

Pan Yuming, an expert with Beijing's industry and commerce federation, said the government will impose detailed standards on industries such as dining, hair-dressing and domestic services and cultivate professionals in those industries.

“During the drafting of those standards, we have learned from other countries such as Japan, which is well-known for its good service, and will try to raise the efficiency of the city's services,” he said.

The bureau signed agreements on Wednesday with Meituan and Alibaba Group's Koubei, two online consumer service providers, to use their big databases to evaluate the degree of satisfaction from the public.

## Mercedes dealer settles dispute with woman over defective car

By ZHANG YANGFEI  
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A woman involved in a dispute with a Mercedes-Benz dealer in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, got some satisfaction on Tuesday night when the dealer agreed to give her a replacement car and a full refund of a so-called financial service fee she had been required to pay.

The dealer also invited the woman to visit the Mercedes-Benz factory and assembly line in Germany, offered to give her 10 years of VIP service and threw a belated birthday party for her.

An image of the written agreement was posted online.

The woman had complained that she had been sold a defective car by the dealer on March 27. She said the engine of the Mercedes-Benz CLS300 developed problems soon after she drove it off the lot, but she was unable to get a refund or exchange.

She also said she was asked to pay a financial service fee of 15,000 yuan (\$2,240) to an employee without knowing what the money was for.

The incident caused an uproar online and culminated in a video showing her complaining while sitting on the hood of another car at the dealership.

The China Consumers Association said on Wednesday that financial services in the automobile industry should be clear and that forced transactions, such as the financial service fee, should be eliminated.

In a discussion on Wednesday morning, the association concluded that car dealers fabricate required items to get more money out of customers and fail to provide invoices or other certificates.

When disputes about quality arise, consumers often experience difficulties negotiating with dealers or lodging complaints.

Participants in the discussion were told that some dealers force consumers to purchase insurance or demand financial service fees without issuing invoices, both of which are illegal and should be severely punished, the association said.

### Briefly

#### BEIJING IM tools shut down for porn content

China's internet regulators have launched a campaign to clean up instant messaging tools that are involved in fraud or spreading illegal information. Authorities have shut down nine instant messaging tools they say were used to spread pornographic content, offer prostitution or sell pornographic audio and video products, according to the Cyber-space Administration of China. An official with the administration said that because instant messaging tools have a low entry level and a large number of users, they present a challenge.

#### YUNNAN Money may have been fed to giraffes

A safari park is searching for a mysterious visitor on Wednesday who was suspected of attempting to feed real paper currency to giraffes in the park. It urged visitors not to feed “strange things” to the animals. Staff members at Yunnan Safari Park in Kunming found about 10,000 (\$1,495) in Chinese yuan notes scattered on the ground of the enclosure where giraffes were on display at around noon on Tuesday, and immediately gathered it up, according to the park. The park has been searching for the owner of the money through various means over the past day but did not find the owner.

## Couple who poisoned birds to be schooled in ecological protection

By CAO CHEN in Shanghai  
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A couple who poisoned wild birds on Shanghai's Chongming Island will perform two years of ecological service work in the area, according to the Shanghai Railway Transport Procuratorate.

The couple — a man surnamed Shen and his wife, surnamed Chen — must also pay 30,000 yuan (\$4,400) for environmental conservation. The husband was sentenced to seven months in prison.

The pair, who were detained in August on suspicion of illegal hunting, laid poisoned wheat seeds in open farmland on Chongming Island in July and August, killing 1,763 wild birds, including a Chinese spotted neck dove, orien-

tal turtle dove and red turtle dove, which are of high research and economic value.

According to the investigation, the dead birds were worth more than 500,000 yuan.

The procuratorate said the couple's behavior harmed the environment of Chongming Island.

Both of them must participate in daily maintenance, patrols and other ecological conservation work three times per week until they serve 1,800 hours.

They will also be responsible for promoting environmental awareness to the public, such as by distributing brochures and posting environmental protection slogans.

It was the first time that the authority had allowed people to pay for losses ecological resources

through public service work, rather than only paying in money.

“The convicted couple will understand ecological conservation and why wild birds need protection through service, which is an efficient way to promote awareness of ecological protection,” said Zhang Dongsheng, associate professor in the College of Fisheries and Life Science at Shanghai Ocean University.

Shanghai is one of the stops in the migratory path of birds from Siberia to Australia. Chongming Island is home to an assortment of natural parks, wetlands and ecological villages.

Chongming Dongtan National Nature Reserve, the largest wintering site in China, plays host to about 1 million migratory birds

every year. No bird-watchers or photographers are allowed in the area.

Hunting has been prohibited on the island since 2016, and the local government has formed a 16-member patrol team.

“We frequently receive reports from our volunteers that many cases of poaching and poisoning are found during their patrols all year, especially during spring migration seasons,” said Wang Huo, deputy secretary-general of the China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation.

To tackle the issue, Wang encouraged public participation in combating bird poaching. For example, the foundation has developed a free app called RiverEye, which

CHINA

# Visitors get a taste of Mars at Gansu base

Simulated installation provides a hands-on experience, inspires youth

By **ZHANG YANGFEI** in Beijing and **MA JINGNA** in Jinchang, Gansu

A simulated Mars base officially opened on Wednesday in Gansu province, aiming to popularize science and boost interest in space exploration among youth.

The site, covering 67 square kilometers in Jinchang, contains nine main parts, including an airlock module, a general control module and a biological module, and can simulate the Mars environment to teach astronauts how to survive.

Five sections, featuring space communication, extraterrestrial survival, space exploration, living in space and space development, will also be established where visitors can fully immerse themselves in the Mars experience.

Wang Jiantai, Party chief of Jinchang, said the base is a first in space education for tourists, Mars-themed tourism, astronomical research and moviemaking.

The base is a part of the country's C Space Plan, an education project for Chinese youngsters launched in October. Located 20 kilometers from the city center, the base was developed on land that resembles Martian conditions with its unique landscape and climate.

"We have designed a series of experiential, interesting and spreadable approaches to kindle people's interest and enthusiasm toward science, exploration and innovation, especially young people," said Zhao Tianshu, director of the project's education system.

In addition to allowing visitors to experience a landing on another planet, conduct extraterrestrial experiments and go about routine life in space, the base also creates dramatic scenarios for role-playing.

Bai Fan, the founder of the project, said the base is intended to boost courage as its core value and to inspire young people to face unknown challenges. They will have a more interesting and creative study experience by role-playing and teamwork during the visit, he said.

"Our science communication needs a more realistic, interactive model to arouse the youth's passion for the starry sky and help them put that passion into practice," Bai said.

Feng Chunping, executive deputy director of the China Center for Aerospace Science and Technology International Communications, said youth are key to the future of China's space exploration, and aerospace science education plays a crucial role.

But traditional education has tended to focus on displays of scientific results or screening films while failing to provide interactive opportunities, she said.

"It is not easy to make science communication attractive and interesting while maintaining precise and informative. Only by combining innovative thinking with precise science will it be possible to produce truly outstanding science communication products. The opening of the base is a new model for popularizing aerospace science."

Ma Xi'e, a 12-year-old student from a middle school in Jinchang, said she looks forward to visiting the base and feeling the mysteries of space.

"I will be able to try on a space suit, feel the space capsule and experience walking in space. These activities make space less mysterious and fill me with curiosity," she said.

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A staff member poses in a mock space suit at the C Space Plan Mars simulation base in Jinchang, Gansu province, on Wednesday. THOMAS PETER / REUTERS

# Foxconn boss to run for top office in Taiwan

Terry Gou, head of the world's largest electronics supplier, Foxconn, confirmed on Wednesday that he will enter Taiwan's 2020 leadership election.

Gou, Taiwan's richest person, with a net worth of \$7.6 billion according to Forbes, said he would join the race and take part in the primaries of the Kuomintang party.

Candidates are expected to face a slate of competitors in the 2020 election. Current Taiwan leader Tsai Ing-wen of the Democratic Progressive Party has said she will seek a second four-year term.

Gou said on Tuesday that he was considering a leadership bid and hinted that he was close to a decision when he told more than 100 people packed into a temple that he would follow the instruction of a sea goddess who had told him to run.

"Peace, stability and Taiwan's future economy are my core values," Gou said later at the KMT's head-



**Terry Gou**

quarters in Taipei. He urged the party to rediscover the spirit and honor of the KMT and to recover support for the party among Taiwan's youth.

The KMT said this week Gou had been a party member for more than 50 years and had given it an interest-free loan of NT\$45 million (\$1.5 million) in 2016 in the name of his mother, which showed his loyalty.

Gou, 68, began his career in plastics before branching out into electronics and later mobile phones. Gou gives his age as 69 in keeping with Chinese tradition, which designates a child as 1 at birth.

Gou this week said he was planning to step away from day-to-day operations at Foxconn but would continue to guide the company's "major direction" while working on a book about his management philosophy and bringing along a new generation of business leaders.

CHINA DAILY — AGENCIES

## Wind pushes fire



A blaze rages through a forest in the Qipan Mountains in the suburbs of Shenyang, Liaoning province, on Wednesday. The fire, which broke out in the afternoon, was pushed by strong winds. A total of 150 fire trucks and more than 1,300 personnel were dispatched to fight it. YANG QING / XINHUA

# Cities tap Yangtze for drinking water

By **HOU LIQIANG** [houliliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn](mailto:houliliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn)

Water pollution has forced many regions, especially in southern China, to change their sources of drinking water, with many reaching out to the Yangtze River, a report said.

The contamination of water bodies has made drinking water in southern China more scarce, despite a dense network of waterways, according to the report, published earlier this year by the Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs, an NGO.

A campaign to root out environmental violations at water intake sites is expected to improve things, but environmental authorities should be aware that local governments may choose to abandon their water intake sources to avoid rectifying problems, said Ma Jun, director of the institute.

Information compiled by the NGO from government documents show that at least 162 sources of drinking water across the country have been abandoned or were slated for suspension over the past decade, mostly in the south.

It said many areas in the south must receive water diverted from far away because of local pollution. For some areas in the north, diversion is chosen because of water shortages. Many places in Jiangsu province have turned to the Yangtze for water.

Previously, cities in southern Jiangsu relied on Taihu Lake, China's third-largest freshwater lake, and other local water bod-

“In the long run, the campaign will help curb pollution at sites that supply drinking water and prevent more of them from being abandoned due to pollution.”

**Ma Jun**, director of the Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs

ies for their drinking water. This changed, however, after a major outbreak of blue-green algae in 2007. The incident forced Wuxi to temporarily suspend water supplies. After the incident, major cities in the Taihu basin turned to the Yangtze for drinking water, the report said.

In Taizhou, located on the north shore of the Yangtze, Xinghua is the only one of six areas administrated by the city that has yet to tap the Yangtze for its drinking water. But a diversion project from the river was listed on the Xinghua government's agenda last year.

Yancheng, which is further north of the Yangtze, turned to the river for water in late June after experiencing at least four drinking water contamination incidents.

"As many areas abandon local sources and turn to the Yangtze,

some sections of the river have become overcrowded" with diversion facilities, the report said.

Even the Yangtze is not a perfectly safe supply. In April 2014, for example, drinking water in Taizhou was interrupted because of pollutants discharged from local chemical plants.

In 2016, inspectors from the central government visited 12 of the 30 sites for collecting drinking water along the Yangtze in Jiangsu province and found eight with environmental violations, including the existence of ports for the transportation of chemicals and fish farms in protected areas.

In March 2018, the Ministry of Ecology and Environment and the Ministry of Water Resources initiated a special campaign to root out environmental violations at sites that supply drinking water. As of the end of last year, all but nine of 6,251 violations that inspectors found had been corrected, at a total investment of 41 billion yuan (\$6.1 billion) in 31 provincial regions.

According to the top environmental watchdog, 3,740 industrial enterprises were relocated and 1,883 wastewater outlets were shut down during the campaign.

"In the long run, the campaign will help curb pollution at sites that supply drinking water and prevent more of them from being abandoned due to pollution," Ma from the institute said.

There are specific dos and don'ts at these sites, but some of the restrictions will be lifted if they cease to be sources of drinking water.

# People who touch pandas prompt a higher fence

By **HUANG ZHILING** in Chengdu [huangzhiling@chinadaily.com.cn](mailto:huangzhiling@chinadaily.com.cn)

The China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda in Wolong National Nature Reserve in Sichuan province said on Wednesday it had started rebuilding a fence where a visitor had touched a panda cub.

It was making the fence higher so that visitors cannot reach the pandas and it asked visitors to keep away from the animals. It asked them to refrain from climbing over the fence and from feeding or touching the pandas, said Wang Jisi, an information officer at the center.

On April 7, a woman surnamed Han said in social media that she and somebody else had managed to touch a panda cub without the consent of the center.

From the nine photos uploaded by Han, people could see three panda cubs frolicking behind a green fence and climbing the fence, along with two human hands touching the nose and head of a cub. The one touching the head had red nail polish.

The post angered netizens who criticized Han for endangering the cub, fearing diseases from humans might pass to the animals.

A week later, Han deleted her posts, saying she loved pandas and would behave herself in the future. She also said she loved other animals and kept two dogs at home.

One netizen condemned Han for not considering the spread of the canine distemper virus to the panda cub from her two dogs.

The virus was reported to have caused the deaths of captive giant pandas in 1997, when three of the bears died at the Chongqing Zoo in Sichuan's neighboring Chongqing municipality.

Another outbreak in Shaanxi province caused the deaths of five pandas between December 2014 and April 2015.

Pandas are docile but can be fierce. In 2005, a female photographer from Hong Kong jumped into a panda enclosure to take photos. To the surprise of onlookers, the panda slashed one of her arms, causing profuse bleeding, the center said.

Zhou Mengqi, a veteran photographer in Chengdu, was chased by a panda that had been eating quietly until he took pictures of the animal up close at the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding in the early 1990s.

"Its claw touched my shoes before I escaped through a door," he said.

China has a total of 548 captive pandas. Of those, 285 are in the China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda and 196 live at the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding.

## 70 YEARS ON | FROM THE GRASSROOTS

# Fuzhou-Pingtang bridge to be completed this year

By **ZHANG YI** in Pingtan, Fujian [zhangyi1@chinadaily.com.cn](mailto:zhangyi1@chinadaily.com.cn)

Construction of China's first cross-sea bridge accommodating both vehicles and railway traffic — the longest of its type in the world — will be completed this year and will open to traffic early next year, said Yao Pengyuan, one of its top engineers.

Pingtang Haixia Rail-Road Bridge will provide a 16.3-kilometer connection between downtown Fuzhou, Fujian province, and the island county of Pingtan off the east coast of Fujian.

The new bridge will cut travel time from two hours to about 30 minutes between the two areas.

In the past, Pingtan has been a development bottleneck because of poor transportation. Since the establishment of the Pingtan Comprehensive Pilot Zone in 2010, the local government has ramped up its efforts to build a comprehensive transportation system.

In 2010, the Strait Bridge began operating for cars only. It links the island with an outlying county of Fuzhou and is currently the only entrance and exit for the island. It takes about two hours to get from



A cross-sea bridge for motor vehicles and trains linking downtown Fuzhou with Pingtan is under construction. ZHANG YI / CHINA DAILY

the island to Fuzhou's downtown. Before the bridge opened, a ship was required to get from Pingtan to the mainland.

Yao, the engineer from the bridge building bureau of China Railway Construction Co, said, "Strong winds make it tough to build a bridge over the water, where about 300 days a year the wind is heavy and impedes construction."

The new bridge has two layers, with the upper deck consisting of a six-lane highway with speeds up to 100 kilometers per hour. The lower deck carries a double-track railway, on which trains can run up to 200 kilometers per hour. Construction started in November 2013, with an estimated investment of 10.9 billion yuan (\$1.7 billion).

The cross-sea rail link will be an integral part of the 88-km Fuzhou-

## Pingtang Haixia Rail-Road Bridge



Pingtang railway, which starts at Songxia Port in neighboring Changle county, Fuzhou, and terminates at Su'ao town in Pingtan.

In the draft outline of the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20), a high-speed railway linking Beijing and Taipei, Taiwan, was proposed. The Fuzhou-Pingtang railway represents the southeast end of that railway. For the remainder of the distance — Pingtan to Taiwan — an underwater tunnel has been proposed.

Pingtang is the nearest mainland jurisdiction to Taiwan, with only 68 sea miles to Taiwan's Hsinchu city.

# Tide turns for families in the ‘Sea of Death’



Residents of a township in the middle of the Taklimakan Desert are being relocated to new, modern homes. **Zhang Boning** reports for Xinhua from Daliyabuy, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

An aerial view shows Imin Matkurban's house in a forest of desert poplars on the banks of the Kiliya River in Daliyabuy, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. PHOTOS BY HU Huhu / XINHUA



Imin (second from right) and his wife chat with neighbors.



Imin has to ride about 5 kilometers to buy groceries.



Imin and his wife check desert broomrape plants near their house.



Imin studies standard spoken and written Chinese.



Imin buys vegetables at a market in Yutian county.

**Editor's note:** This is the second in a series of stories focusing on the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, looking at the progress of its economy, cultural and business sectors, and poverty alleviation measures.

After visiting his son, who is studying in Yutian county, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, Imin Matkurban bought some vegetables before returning home.

Through forests of desert poplars and rose willows, the car carried Imin over countless sand dunes to his home in the middle of the Taklimakan Desert, China's largest arid zone.

It took about seven hours for the 39-year-old shepherd to get home, even though Yutian is no more than 300 kilometers from his home in Daliyabuy township.

Vegetables are difficult to find in the Taklimakan, aka the “Sea of Death”, which was why Imin spent 50 yuan (\$7.45) buying them in the county seat.

He and his family make a living by herding and planting *Cistanche deserticola*, or desert broomrape, a parasitic plant known in traditional Chinese medicine as the “ginseng of the desert”.

Daliyabuy sits on the banks of the Kiliya River. Unsurprisingly, its name means “riverbank” in the Uygur language.

As early as 1896, the renowned Swedish geographer Sven Hedin journeyed to the end of the Kiliya River to conduct research on the people of the area. However, it wasn't until the 1950s that the settlement was officially named Daliyabuy by the government of Yutian.

The extremely poor transportation infrastructure means Daliyabuy's residents still lead traditional, slow-paced herding lives, largely unaware of how quickly things are changing in modern cities around the world.

To improve the residents' lives, the local government has launched a relocation program.

In August, it began moving the first 102 households to a site with government-provided houses and infrastructure, including schools and health clinics.

Matkurban's family will be among the last group of households to be relocated.

They are now living out their final months in the “Sea of Death” before they move to the new site, about 100 km from Yutian, in September.

As a village of great geographical, historical and archaeological value, Daliyabuy will become a tourist attraction, while Imin and all 216 impoverished households from Daliyabuy will embrace fresh, prosperous lives in their new homes.

Imin takes a young lamb out of the sheepfold to prevent his flock from competing for food.

CHINA

# Thangka masters pass on ‘persistent spirit’

Inheritors of the craft see value in its history and insist on creating them the traditional way

In his teenage years, *thangka* master Norbu Sidar recited vast sutras from Buddhist scriptures, and also made sure that his nephews Konchoge and Tsering did the same. Born into a family of *thangka* painters in Shigatse, a city in the Tibet autonomous region, they are following in the footsteps of their ancestors to continue the craft.

*Thangka* is a Tibetan Buddhist scroll painting on cotton or silk, which is painted with mineral and organic pigments derived from coral, agate, sapphire, pearl, gold and other materials so that the colors last for centuries. The art form dates back to the 10th century and paintings typically depict Buddhist deities.

Norbu Sidar is a renowned master at the Mensar school in Tibet. Mensar is one of four *thangka* schools, which focuses on the elaborate details in Buddhist images, landscapes, animals and garments.

He is the head of the Tibetan Thangka Academy in downtown Lhasa, which offers free classes to interested applicants, particularly those poor but talented apprentices from his hometown of Shigatse.

Konchoge, his nephew and deputy, is also a successful painter. He often sits for hours in front of a painter's easel to practice, and wants to become a highly acclaimed master.

“To paint a *thangka*, one needs to exert the power of the eyes, hands and heart with the utmost purity and show persistent attention to detail,” Konchoge said.

### Family roots

Norbu Sidar and Konchoge are the fourth and fifth generations of *thangka* painters from the Thutop family. Thutop, who lived about 100 years ago in Tashigang village of Lhaze county in Shigatse, learned the basics of painting when he worked for a family in Lhasa.

After a few years, Thutop established his own style and began passing down the craft. His son, Dawa Dondrup, was a gifted painter and was invited to restore ancient paintings in the main hall of the Sagya Monastery in Tibet.

Dawa Dondrup, who was Norbu Sidar's grandfather, inspired and trained the boy.

“When I was young, my grandpa was painting most of the time,” Norbu Sidar said.

At the age of 12, Norbu Sidar already knew the sutras by heart. “I thought it was very boring to recite the books, but the elders in my family kept checking my recitations. I



Master Norbu Sidar (right) watches one of his students paint a *thangka* at the Tibetan Thangka Academy in Lhasa, Tibet autonomous region. PHOTOS BY LODEN / XINHUA



Students in the advanced level class practice painting *thangka* at the academy.

would get scolded if I was slipshod,” he said.

He used burnt willow branches to draw on a board of white pigment before going on to practice coloring and completing lines for the *thangka*. He studied under his grandfather for six years.

As *thangka* paintings are highly

geometric and leave little room for creativity, Norbu Sidar said that practice is the only way to make them perfect.

### Years of practice

In the 1980s, Norbu Sidar participated in the repair and renovation project at the Tashilhunpo Monas-

A single *thangka* may have hundreds of images of deities, so the lines are crucial. The minimum practice each day is seven to eight hours for two years.”

**Norbu Sidar**, head of the Tibetan Thangka Academy

tery in Shigatse, where he honed his drawing techniques with seasoned painters.

Norbu Sidar said that the most difficult part was drawing the eyes. “Even the thinnest line matters. Each brush stroke tells the level of *thangka* mastery, which varies from one painter to another,” he said.

Later, Norbu Sidar restored

murals in the Sera and Drepung monasteries in Lhasa and became skilled at it.

From 2005 to 2015, he independently worked in the Potala Palace to restore 18th-century paintings — a job only the best conservators could handle.

“Some of the lines had disappeared, and the images were hardly decipherable. I had to read books to make out what was missing, and draw on my sketchbook before I laid my brush on the walls of paintings,” he said.

A two-story building lies on Pargor street in downtown Lhasa, where Norbu Sidar, Konchoge, and their students retreat to sharpen their skills.

The group of around 40 students is divided into beginner, intermediate and advanced levels at the academy, and take the classes for free. Some leave to find jobs after they have learned the painting basics, but students like Tenzin have their minds set on becoming masters.

Tenzin, a 24-year-old student from an impoverished family in Lhasa, has spent seven years taking classes with Norbu Sidar. The academy, which is supported by government funds, gives him an allowance of 2,000 yuan (\$298) every month. He keeps 400 yuan of the allowance and sends the rest to his parents.

“I want to use my brush to change my life and that of my family, but before I can do that, I need to have really good skills,” he said.

Though soft-spoken, Norbu Sidar is uncompromising when it comes to training.

“A single *thangka* may have hundreds of images of deities, so the lines are crucial. The minimum practice each day is seven to eight hours for two years. It takes that much effort to be able to work the lines right,” Norbu Sidar said.

*Thangka* was listed as a national cultural heritage in 2006, a status that has since given the art a strong boost. Over 10,000 people now work in the *thangka* industry in Tibet.

Government funds for heritage protection and sales revenue from the paintings help cover the operating costs of the academy. Every year, the academy hosts a seminar to carry out scholarly exchanges, research and training. Over the years, more than 300 craftsmen have graduated from the academy.

### Inheritance, innovation

Though many shops in Lhasa sell inexpensive *thangka* paintings to undiscerning tourists and buyers for quick profits, Norbu Sidar and Konchoge insist on making their *thangka* the slow and traditional way, using expertly-made brushes from horse, goat and cat hairs.

“The value of a *thangka* lies in the history and art it contains. You can never be hasty about it,” said Konchoge, who started learning the art at the age of 7.

He has traveled extensively across the country to give lectures on *thangka*. “I want to be a messenger for *thangka*. It is probably a good idea to have live broadcasts on how we approach the art to a wider audience online,” he said.

Norbu Sidar said: “As one of the pearls of the Tibetan culture, *thangka* art must be passed on and revived in modern times. I hope my students will inherit the culture and pass on the persistent spirit that the art embodies.”

XINHUA

## Home comforts for both the elderly and young

By **HU MEIDONG** in Fuzhou and **LI LEI** in Beijing

Over the past five months, Tan Peifang, 84, and Wang Xinhang, fresh from college, have lived together in the seaside city of Fuzhou in Fujian province.

They eat together, chat and go out for walks. To all extents and purposes, they look like a loving grandmother-granddaughter pair. But they are not related. Up until Wang moved in, they had never even met.

Widowed eight years ago, Tan chose not to move to live with her two sons working in the same city. Both were married and she thought it would be inconvenient.

So, she hired a nanny instead to take care of her.

That arrangement lasted until last year, when her nanny quit.

She was reluctant to find a new one as she had felt “uneasy” with the arrangement.

Tan then heard of a “cohabiting” program rolled out by her community — where thousands residents are age 60 or older. A tech company called Laoxiangqing (Senior with the Young) launched the program that aims to pair senior care seekers who can provide accommodations with younger people who need cheap accommodations.

The requirement: young people should take care of the elderly hosts — physically and psychologically — in exchange for free lodgings.

With no better options at hand,

the widow signed up for the program, and in October she met the 24-year-old Wang. They immediately hit it off and built up a rapport.

“I like it when she says hello to me when she comes home and asks about my well-being, just like a granddaughter,” Tan said.

The instant intimacy was also felt on Wang's side.

She described Tan as a smiling and caring person. “Granny likes spicy food, but she cooked mild food when I had a terrible cold,” Wang said, adding that Tan would also comfort her if she had a bad day at work.

Since the program debuted in 2017, more than 1,600 people have signed up, according to Laoxiangqing.

The program was rolled out against the backdrop of a rapidly graying population. The National Bureau of Statistics figure shows that China had more than 166 million people age 65 or older by the end of last year.

Meanwhile, housing has become increasingly unaffordable for young people, with prices almost quadrupling over the past 20 years, reaching an average 7,892 yuan (\$1,176) per square meter in 2017. The situation is even worse in first-tier cities such as Beijing and Shanghai.

There has also been explosive growth in rents in recent years, making cost an increasing burden for fresh graduates there.

Chen Xiaoqing, the Party chief



Tan Peifang and Wang Xinhang watch TV together in Tan's apartment in Fuzhou, Fujian province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

I like it when she says hello to me when she comes home and asks about my well-being, just like my granddaughter.”

**Tan Peifang**, Fuzhou resident

who oversees the community project, said five senior residents in her community have signed up for the program, and said the program could be a win-win solution for the aging issue and the soaring house prices.

Hiring nannies has traditionally been the solution to looking after senior citizens, but Chen said this approach can often neglect the psychological needs of the elderly.

Despite the advantages, Chen admitted the “matchmaking” process was not easy, and the success rate was low because it had rigid requirements for its participants.

“The senior participants should be able to care for themselves, and the young should have a sterling character, and the pair should be of the same gender,” she said.

But she added that the program is a wholesome attempt to find a way to look after aging residents.

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## Farmers attract sales with live broadcasts

As a flurry of animated “thumbs-up” and “like” icons popped up on her mobile phone, 24-year-old fruit farmer Han Mei attracted over 5,000 viewers on her livestream during one recent afternoon.

Unlike other “cyber stars” doing livestreams of musical performances or of themselves playing games, Han attracted 90,000 followers by selling fruit, such as peaches and persimmons, and sharing her country life in her hometown of Difang town in East China's Shandong province.

Over the past nine months, the turnover of her online store has exceeded 1.1 million yuan (\$163,800), with the highest single-day turnover reaching 50,000 yuan. Difang, located in the Yimeng Mountain area, used to be a major poverty region. It is just one of the many areas benefiting from e-commerce and livestreaming.

On Taobao, a large online shopping website run by Alibaba, over 100,000 farmers are doing the same thing as Han, holding a total of more than 60,000 livestreaming broadcasts every month.

“Selling products online is not only a change in sales method, but it also shows the improving quality of Chinese agricultural products and an upgrading of the agricultural industry,” said Zhang Qingjin, director of the Institute of Agricultural Development at the Shandong Academy of Social Sciences.

The government has been encouraging the use of e-commerce to alleviate poverty in recent years. The country has pledged to deepen agricultural supply-side structural reform and win the tough battle against poverty, according to the No 1 Central Document released by the central authorities in February.

In recent years, Difang has committed to developing new varieties of fruits, such as peaches and plums, and to moving up the value chain. It is now known as China's “town of canned fruit.”

“Almost every household has one member working in the canned fruit industry,” said Zhang Guanlin, deputy head of Difang. With 120 companies in the industry, the town produces 750,000 metric tons of canned fruit every year, with an annual turnover of 7 billion yuan.

Companies such as Taobao have advanced government efforts in introducing special poverty alleviation programs to train farmer livestreamers and help countryside sellers promote their products.

“Farmer internet celebrities have set a good example for farmers to mobilize themselves in fighting poverty,” said Zhang, the institute director. “They also help advance the country's rural revitalization by earning their hometowns a reputation and creating a ‘cyber star economy.’”

XINHUA

# COMMENT

## Editorials

### Gov't's actions ensure economy in better fettle than expected

China's GDP growth in the first quarter beat market expectations to achieve a 6.4 percent year-on-year expansion, a hard-won result that reflects the country's strenuous efforts to keep the world's second-largest economy on track.

Although it is 0.4 of a percentage point down from the growth in the same period a year ago, the reading was on par with that registered in the fourth quarter of last year, indicating that China's economic slowdown, which the market had feared could continue this year, has been effectively checked, at least for now.

Since last year, China has rolled out a variety of supporting policies, such as tax and fee cuts, increasing funds for infrastructure investment, and targeted monetary easing, to ease the pressure on the corporate sector. These have proved effective, and they have been important factors behind the improving corporate sentiment and steady growth rate.

The growing signs that China and the United States may be ready to reach a deal to end their year-long trade dispute have also bolstered the sentiment of investors and corporate managers, giving another boost that has resulted in the higher-than-expected GDP growth.

The stable performance of the Chinese economy in the first quarter has laid a solid foundation for the country to achieve its whole-year growth target, which is between 6 and 6.5 percent.

The stabilization of China's economy is also of great significance to the world economy, which is facing the challenge of a gradual slowdown. The International Monetary Fund has cut its growth forecast for the world economy this year, highlighting widespread concerns over the prospects of global economic growth.

However, it would be premature to conclude that the Chinese economy has bottomed out, since it does face some challenges. Compared with the first quarter of last year, major indicators, such as industrial output and fixed-asset investment and retail sales growth, have all eased in the first three months, showing that more efforts are needed to improve the economic fundamentals.

The country also needs to properly handle its monetary stance to ensure stable growth while avoiding injecting too much liquidity into the market, in order to prevent asset prices and consumer inflation from surging. The consumer price index rose 2.3 percent year-on-year in March, up from 1.5 percent in February, ringing an alarm bell for policymakers.

The country should also take advantage of the relatively stable state of the economy to continue to press ahead with its supply-side structural reforms and economic opening-up to improve the quality of growth and ensure longer-term sustainability.

The dual task of achieving stable growth and improving the quality of growth will put China to the test this year, especially considering the uncertainties on the external front.

### Some in Australia insist on banging the same old drum

A worrying trend is gaining momentum in Australia as the country's media are giving increasing coverage to political figures and academics airing far-right, even racist views.

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation has just offered the latest example of this in a program that it claimed was intended to expose so-called Chinese interference in Australian affairs.

*Four Corners*, ABC's current affairs program, rolled out a lengthy report last week in a bid to provide new evidence of China's interference in Australian media, universities and political process. Anyone without bias could easily judge it was not only full of prejudice against China but also sought to whip up anti-China sentiment in Australian society.

This is not the first time that the program has vented its spleen on China. An article introducing the program on the ABC website did not hesitate to boast that a similar report in 2017 helped Australia pass laws to ban foreign interference in its domestic politics.

People cannot help but ask whether the ABC's hidden agenda is to try and halt all Australian interaction with China. Whatever its aim, its controversial program has done a disservice to the healthy development of China-Australia ties.

As a country thousands of kilometers away from Australia, China has repeatedly said it has no intention to interfere in Australian politics. With the two economies being highly complementary, both China and Australia have benefited from their trade ties.

Not to mention that Australian Chinese, who account for about 4 percent of the country's population, have contributed to developing the economy and enriching its diversified culture. Any media report that fails to show this big picture of relations in an objective and fair way clearly has its own agenda.

With the federal election in Australia, scheduled for May, drawing near, some Australian media outlets and politicians may be trying to seek political gains by singing the same old refrain of China interference again. Rhetoric vilifying China has unfortunately been a feature of some Australian politicians keen to appeal to certain voters.

Such an evil wind is part of a broader tendency in which minority groups, including the Australian Muslims, have been frequently targeted. Admittedly, this ill trend, if unchecked, will tarnish Australia's image as a multi-cultural society.

This time as before, the Australian media's attacks against China are just baseless rumors. Such ploys, which are intended to smear China's image, do not stand up to scrutiny. Instead of making such irresponsible unwarranted accusations, the Australian media should seek to contribute to mutual trust and friendship as that is in the best interests of the two countries.

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## Opinion Line

### Together, three neighbors can better promote free trade in Asia

**THE 15TH ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS AMONG CHINA,** Japan and the Republic of Korea on a free trade agreement was held in Tokyo last week. Zhong Sheng, a columnist for People's Daily, comments:

The three countries had in-depth exchanges of opinions on trade in goods, trade in services, investment, rules and other issues and, on the basis of a consensus achieved on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, agreed to further improve the level of trade and investment liberalization and forge a RCEP-plus free trade agreement.

The joint efforts of the three countries to advance the construction of a free trade agreement show their common determination to uphold the multilateral trading system and oppose unilateralism and protectionism.

China, Japan and the ROK are the beneficiaries and also advocates of free trade, and it is their common aspiration to safeguard free trade.

The world has become a global village in which countries are becoming increasingly interconnected and interdependent in economic and social development. Protectionism will not produce winners, and promoting connectivity and accelerating integrated development is the right way to common prosperity and development.

Only by expanding opening-up and reducing barriers can international economic and trade cooperation be boosted. Instead, a beggar-thy-neighbor or isolationist policy will make the world economy difficult to develop healthily. It is due to such concerns that the World Trade Organization has lowered its forecast for global trade growth for this year to 2.6 percent.

To choose an open or closed approach tests the wisdom of all countries. To adhere to opening-up as a basic national policy is a strategic choice China has made based on its own development needs. Despite facing protectionist pressure, China has still decided to open wider to the outside world.

China's greater efforts to promote openness at a higher level, and build an open world economy and a community with a shared future for mankind will effectively promote economic globalization, safeguard the multilateral trading system and facilitate openness, cooperation and common development among countries.

According to Japanese official data, by Oct 1, 2018, the total population in Japan, foreign citizens included, had dropped by another 263,000 and reached the low point of 126 million.

Worse, the percentage of the working population, or those aged between 15 and 64, fell to 59.7 percent of the total population, which is the lowest since 1950. The percentage of those over 70 reached 20.7 percent of the total population, rising above the 20 percent mark for the first time.

Japanese analysts generally believe that the sharp decline in the population is a major cause of the country's economic recession.

First, with a declining population, the domestic market in Japan is withering. This in turn leads enterprises to have lower expectations of the market, thus dampening their enthusiasm to invest. A vicious circle is formed this way.

Second, the decline in the population has resulted in a labor shortage. In order to solve that, the Japanese government has encouraged women, seniors, and foreigners to enter the labor market, but they have lower wages than male workers, further curbing consumption.

Third, the rising percentage of senior citizens in the population is a growing burden on Japan's health and pension systems.

Japanese people who have not yet entered old age lack confidence in the social security system, and planning for pensions in advance is also an important reason for Japan's consumption contraction.

As early as 1989, the birthrate in Japan dropped to 1.57, which sent a warning to society. However, the Japanese government failed to take corresponding measures, and the problem has worsened in the past 30 years.

The Japanese economy has revived a little in the past few years, but its gross domestic product growth rate dropped from 1.9 percent in 2017 to 0.7 percent in 2018 because of global trade conflicts and natural disasters in the country. There is hardly any hope to be seen in that digit.

Japan faces critical challenges from its declining and aging population.



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

## What They Say

### Northeast rust belt needs new lease on life

**Editor's note:** Without warning, Hegang, a little-known border city in Heilongjiang province, has become a catchword on social media for its low housing price — a 70-square-meter apartment costs about 20,000 yuan (\$2,982), which is not enough to buy half a square meter of housing in the center of big cities such as Beijing and Shanghai. China Daily reporter Li Yang comments:

Most people know Hegang as a coal city from their geography textbook at middle school. In the planned economy era, from the 1950s to 1980s, the city, like many other cities rich in natural resources, was a synonym for stable jobs and predictable life — the government took care of almost all aspects of State-owned enterprise employees' lives, from the cradle to the grave. That Hegang's urbanization rate is nearly 85 percent, markedly higher than the national average of 58 percent, stems from the high proportion of former SOE employees in its population.

But after the depletion of the coal in the late 1990s, the city that had prospered since 1917 when its first coal mine opened was put on a seemingly irreversible declining trend, as it could not find new viable industries to sustain its economy. Hegang's gross domestic product is now only 1 percent that of Shenzhen, Guangdong province, though its area is seven times larger than the latter.

Hegang is an epitome of the 69 resource-depletion cities designated by the central government, nearly half of which are located in Northeast China's Liaoning, Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces.

The central authority vowed to resuscitate the region almost 20 years ago. But, as the housing price in Hegang indicates, the largest rust belt in the country, which accounts for about one-sixth of the national territory and is home to 130 million people, has not demonstrated substantial signs of long-awaited renewal. It is estimated that about 1 million people have relocated to the south over the past decade.

Now is the time to rethink the future of Northeast China. Modern agriculture, tourism and science and technology research in some fields — dozens of national-level research institutes and key universities are located in the region — should be the main fields in which local governments should focus their efforts to maintain sustainable growth.

## Hot words: Exception principle of government information disclosure

政府信息公开的例外原则(zhèngfǔ xīnxī gōngkāi de liwài yuánzé)

Premier Li Keqiang recently signed a revised regulation on government information disclosure, which will take effect on May 15.

The newly revised Government Information Disclosure Regulation stipulates the exceptions for the disclosure of government information, defining the specific situations when government information will not be disclosed.

Information disclosure is an essential

requirement for building a law-abiding government. But in reality, many local governments use various excuses so as not to disclose information.

The new regulation sticks to the principle that government information disclosure should be the common practice. According to the regulation, information that should not be disclosed to the public is



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strictly limited to State secrets and information that may undermine national security, personal privacy, public security and social stability, or any third party's legal rights and interests.

In addition, citizens can apply for administrative review and administrative litigation on the misuse of disclosure exception principle, which will effectively safeguard the public's right to know.

# Views

Zheng Bingwen

## Balance pension fund with growing needs

The Pension Fund Actuarial Report 2019-2050, prepared by the Center for International Social Security Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and released on April 10, has drawn wide public concern. The report, China's first actuarial report on the pension fund, focuses on the old-age pension fund, especially because Premier Li Keqiang said in this year's Government Work Report that the share borne by employers for urban workers' aged-care insurance will be lowered.

Earlier, employers had to pay 20 percent of the premium for aged-care (or pension) insurance while employees paid 8 percent. But to help the employers cope with the economic downturn pressure, the government reduced their contribution to 19 percent, which eased their economic burden by about 500 billion yuan (\$74.49 billion) in the past four years. This year's Government Work Report says the employers' share will be further reduced, from 19 percent to 16 percent nationwide.

The CISSS report calculates the sustainability of the pension fund till 2050, by when China is expected to become a great, modern, socialist country.

First, the number of insured workers will change drastically with the passage of time. At present China has 270 million insured workers, with 1-2 percent increase in their number per year. But 2035 will be the turning point, when the increase ratio is expected to slow down. By 2047, the number of

insured workers is likely to reach its peak of 345 million, and from then onward their number will start declining. By 2050 the total number of insured workers could fall to 341 million. And the dependency ratio of the insured workers is expected to increase from 37.7 percent in 2019 to 81.8 percent in 2050.

Second, there will also be a drastic change in the number of insured workers actually paying pension insurance premium in the next three decades. Not all insured workers pay the premium. For example, only 217 million of the 270 million insured workers have paid their pension insurance premium this year.

According to the CISSS report, the number of insured workers paying their premium will reach its peak of 290 million by 2048, and then their number will start declining — to about 289 million in 2050. And the dependency ratio of the pension fund contributors who have actually paid their premium will increase from 47 percent in 2019 to 96.3 percent in 2050. Which means that if two workers are supporting one retiree in 2019, only one worker will support one retiree in 2050.

Third, there will be a rapid increase in the number of retirees in the following years. From 102 million in 2019, the insured retiree population is expected to increase to 278 million in 2050.

And fourth, there will also be a rapid increase in the income and expenditure of the pension fund in the next three decades.

This year, the fund's income is expected to be 3.71 trillion yuan, or 3.9 percent of China's GDP. It will increase to 23.63 trillion yuan in 2050, accounting for 6.0 percent of the actuarial GDP then. As for the pension fund expenditure, which is expected to be 3.6 trillion yuan this year, it will increase to 34.91 trillion yuan in 2050, accounting for 8.9 percent of China's GDP then.

According to our calculation, the pension fund could show a deficit in 2028, and by 2035 the accumulated surplus of the pension fund could possibly be used up.

All the actuarial results show the reduction in the premium rate will pose a great challenge to China to maintain the sustainability of the pension fund. In fact, a reduction in the premium rate will accelerate the expending of the accumulated pension fund. And the rapidly aging population is primarily to blame for that.

But since the aging population trend cannot be reversed, we can do the next best thing: expedite the pension fund reform and take measures to make the pension fund system more sustainable. For instance, the retirement age could be raised, and the minimum 15

years' pension insurance payment period extended. Also, the pension premium collection and payment system should be improved.

The basic pension insurance fund should accelerate the process of investment and allocation of State-owned assets. And to make the basic pension insurance system more sustainable, the authorities should comprehensively accelerate the pension fund reform.

The author is director of the Center for International Social Security Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

Philip J. Cunningham

## An intriguing encounter at Mar-a-Lago

A gate-crasher to the heavily commercialized Mar-a-Lago presidential residence in Florida tells the guards she's going for a swim but she turns out to be carrying four phones, two passports and a twitchy memory stick, but no bathing suit. This alone is enough to make the caper at Mar-a-Lago sound like the intriguing introduction to a Hollywood film noir, and in a way, it is.

Hollywood tropes fire up the imagination and are ready for the taking — for strivers, media mythmakers and voyeurists alike. Celluloid dreams not only entertain but also inform; they paint the world in a way that appeals to ready-made narratives, easy to grasp and easy to remember.

Zhang Yujing is just one in a long line of individuals, not all of whom were well in the mind, who attempted to breach the security perimeter of a presidential residence, yet rarely has the trespasser's race and nation of origin been as much a part of the story as with her.

What was the racial identity of the last three people who hopped the White House fence?

Mar-a-Lago infiltrated by Chinese spy. That was the teaser for the April 2, 2019, episode of *The Young Turks* broadcast by Cenk Uygur on Facebook and YouTube. One can dispute the show's claim to be the "largest online news show in the world", but it indisputably exploits the lurid attraction of a hot China spy story.

Woman arrested at Mar-a-Lago Club with 2 Chinese passports, malware, Feds say. This is what Fox News said, taking a

**It's not that espionage is not a problem ... But adding the word "China" to "spy" every time something suspicious and inexplicable with a link to China occurs ups the ante. If the media get carried away with the China spy theme, they will be hurtful to ordinary individuals from China and to Americans of Chinese descent as well.**

much-needed break from its usual sensational coverage. In fact, it couched the story as a claim made by the "feds".

Woman from China carrying malware arrested after entering Mar-a-Lago. The first report in The New York Times is rather more assertive, linking the story to other dubious cases involving Chinese. The headline shifts emphasis from an individual to a country. It is left up to the Times' readers, already primed by the newspaper's long-held editorial grudge against Beijing, to connect the dots.

Senior Democratic senators such as Charles Schumer, Mark Warner and Diane Feinstein reacted to the news by raising the specter of targeting by "foreign intelligence services", no doubt sensing an angle on

which to discredit the US president. But even anti-communist Republican Marco Rubio, who has been quick to jump on the anti-China bandwagon, downplayed the China spy whispers: "That's always a threat, but I don't know enough about this person or this case to make a bold pronouncement on what happened here or what this is about."

The US media have largely shed their desire for neutrality, but not profit. The result: a need to feed the advertising beast, to demonize and misdirect, and a need to titillate, hyperventilate.

It's not that espionage is not a problem. The United States and China both have their share of espionage problems. But adding the word "China" to "spy" every time something suspicious and inexplicable with a link to China occurs ups the ante. If the media get carried away with the China spy theme, they will be hurtful to ordinary individuals from China and to Americans of Chinese descent as well.

China spy. It has a sharp ring to it, ready to go straight to film. With more than a century's craft behind it and brilliant advertising campaigns to get the message out, Hollywood excels at narratives that have a rich after-life. Tinseltown's touch simplifies the plot and helps make good-guy-versus-bad-guy sense of situations that are not entirely good, bad, simple nor easy to make sense of.

Even people who have never seen the films know of the fictional villain Fu Manchu. And yes, the bumbling spy also has a rich pedigree, more Peter Sellers twist than

Sean Connery. Take your pick: *Get Smart*, *The Man Who Knew Too Little*, *What's Up, Tiger Lily?*, *Spies Like Us*.

The purported agent at Mar-a-Lago was clearly no Nikita. And no self-respecting member of the Charlie's Angels trio would forget the bathing suit.

So, was the trespasser a con, or perhaps the victim of a con? Both? Neither?

What if it's politically simple but psychologically complex? Perhaps the work of a deluded dreamer. It is human nature to want to speculate, to make sense of it, and yet some things don't make as much sense as we would like them to.

In today's retrograde political climate, where strongmen reign supreme, and barriers of all kinds are being built, there is an ever-present danger of demonization or vilification of people lumped together as members of a group, whether the categorization be perceived or real, racial, religious or national.

The age old us-versus-them is back with a vengeance.

If documentary evidence leads investigators and the public to establish a direct link with a foreign government, so be it — then it's a spy story in which race and nationality factor heavily. Until that time, and that time might not come if the facts don't bear it out, it is better to view the inept perpetrator as a quirky individual, and not the scheming representative of a race or a hostile government.

The author is a media researcher covering Asian politics. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

## BRI will clear doubts as it progresses

**Editor's Note:** Doubts have again been raised over the Belt and Road Initiative's goals, with some calling it a "debt trap" for participating countries and China's "geopolitical expansion tool". Why are anti-China elements using such ploys to malign China? And will they see reason once the Belt and Road Initiative starts yielding fruitful results for the participating countries? Two experts share their views on the issue with China Daily's Pan Yixuan. Excerpts follow:

**BRI's aim is peaceful development for all**

Under the Belt and Road Initiative framework, China wants to share its development experiences with other countries and improve connectivity between Asia and Europe and Africa. China greatly benefited from infrastructure construction, and while sharing this experience with other countries, it aims to work with them to enhance the complementarity between the Belt and Road Initiative and their development plans to strengthen global cooperation.

Many countries that need to build or improve infrastructure networks may not get loans from international financial organizations because of various reasons, including uncertainty of repayment and supposedly poor environmental protection rules. So when China provided such countries with loans — including Pakistan which suffers from electricity shortage owing to the lack of power plants — to help them solve their infrastructure problems, some observers and advanced countries started seeing red.

China's cooperation with Central and South American countries, Panama for instance — which the United States considers China's strategy to enter its "backyard" — is a good example of a natural partnership with complementary resources. In such win-win cooperation, China makes the best use of its advantages in infrastructure construction to help its partner countries build the industries needed to better utilize their rich natural resources and, in the process, lays a solid foundation for further cooperation.

Some countries cannot accept the fact that China's State-owned enterprises account for the majority of Chinese large infrastructure projects overseas and therefore see the Belt and Road Initiative as a challenge to their economic prospects. They keep on alleging that the BRI is a "debt trap" for participating countries so as to force China to lower the proportion of its SOEs' investment in overseas projects. But despite such claims and counterclaims, the Belt and Road Initiative will gather pace with the passage of time.

China, meanwhile, should increase communication with other countries, and keep explaining to them its goals so they can understand that the BRI's aim is peaceful development for all.

*Wang Yiwei, a professor of international relations at Renmin University of China*

**Initiative for the benefit of all participating parties**

Based on the principle of achieving shared growth through discussions and collaboration, the Belt and Road Initiative is ideal for expanded global cooperation. No wonder the 71st United Nations General Assembly incorporated the Belt and Road Initiative into its resolution in 2016, and the UN Security Council called on all parties to participate in the initiative.

The BRI explores multilateral cooperation, yet some countries doubt its aims and objectives. By boosting development in many places in the past years, the BRI projects have helped dispel fears that the initiative is a "debt trap" for participating countries.

That there is still a lot of room for the BRI to improve goes without saying. So the second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation to be held in Beijing later this month should focus on improving BRI projects, including paying greater attention to sustainable development, environmental protection, and better evaluation of and arrangement for future projects.

With BRI projects producing more positive results for the participating countries, the world, including China's detractors, will better understand that its aim is to build a better platform for multilateral cooperation. True, China proposed the Belt and Road Initiative, but it is for the benefit of all the participating parties, as its objective is to promote co-development.

*Shen Dingli, a professor at the Institute of International Studies, Fudan University*

*The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

WORLD

BELT & ROAD INITIATIVE

Rail link gives a big boost to Kenya tourism

\$3.8 billion line is largest investment since country’s independence in 1963

By LUCIE MORANGI

in Nairobi, Kenya  
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Sarah Kabu, the managing director of a travel company in Nairobi, is ebullient about Kenya’s Mombasa-Nairobi Standard Gauge Railway.

Passenger demand for the railway, also known as the Madaraka Express, has surged for the days before and after Easter, a major Christian holiday, which falls on April 21 this year.

Some would-be passengers were out of luck when they tried to make reservations — which need to be booked a month in advance — because the railway’s online interactive portal indicated the trains were fully booked this week and next.

The railway “is one of the best things that has happened in Kenya,” said Kabu, who manages Nairobi-based travel company Bonfire Adventures.

“It shows the government’s commitment to revitalize and transform the overall infrastructure network and accelerate economic expansion,” added Kabu, whose business was recognized as Africa’s leading travel agency during the World Travel Awards 2018.

The company, which has built its reputation by catering to a rising middle class, sees the \$3.8 billion infrastructure project as a game-changer for Kenya’s tourism subsector.

The Madaraka Express, launched in June 2017, operates four passenger trains daily. By November, it had ferried 2 million passengers.

It is the biggest infrastructure investment since Kenya’s independence in 1963 and runs parallel to the railway line built 100 years ago.

The success of the standard-gauge railway rides on its punctuality, safety and efficiency. In addition, its route, which snakes through Tsavo West National Park, gives travelers a glimpse of the country’s wildlife and plants.

For passengers, “the cost is affordable, ... so families can confidently plan their whole weekend with no fear of budget overruns,” said Kabu.

The biggest beneficiaries are lower-middle-class families, she said. Previously, these families rarely traveled to Mombasa due to high bus fares, and airlines were likewise out of their reach. “Families preferred camping

trips in neighboring towns, and spent at least \$200 for a weekend,” she said.

With the railway, they can now pay as little as \$140 for the same amount of time in Mombasa. Tour operators are able to leverage on a high volume of bookings to negotiate discounted hotel prices for their clients.

“Kenyans are mostly traveling over the major holidays, during school holidays in April and December and weekends. Most of them are operating within tight budgets,” Kabu said.

She said those using the Madaraka Express account for about 70 percent of her business. She’s also upbeat about the prospects for domestic tourism.

“The closure of hotels ... has become a thing of the past,” she said. “The industry no longer heavily depends on foreign visitors, as the local numbers keep the industry vibrant.”

Domestic “bed nights” — the occupancy of one person for one night — were estimated to be about 4 million in 2018, according to the government. Furthermore, there were 32.5 percent more domestic travelers than international arrivals.

The growing uptake is a result of a government campaign to boost domestic tourism and buffer the sector against outside shocks.

The launch of the Mombasa-Nairobi Standard Gauge Railway gave impetus to the campaign.

Bountiful Safaris, based in Nairobi, has also seen a boom in business. “Six months after the launch of (the Madaraka Express), we filled up three coaches, which translates to about 354 people,” said Kelvin Daniel, the travel agency’s director.

For the Easter holiday period, about 800 people booked railway tickets through his company, Daniel said.

With competition heating up in the industry, travel agencies find it necessary to distinguish themselves.

Bonfire Adventures, for example, said it has incorporated group transfers into its packages for convenience, by which buses ferry passengers from the Mombasa station to their hotels.

Madaraka Express charges \$10 for adults and \$3.5 for children for the five-hour journey between Nairobi and Mombasa, compared with buses, which used to charge about \$25 for the seven-hour overnight trip, with a trip on the luxury class costing \$30.



Kenyan passengers take the Standard Gauge Railway from Nairobi to Mombasa in June. WANG TENG / XINHUA

Water street



A boy pushes his wheelbarrow through floodwaters as heavy rain falls in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Monday. RAHMAT GUL / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Burnt-out teachers threaten UK with crisis

By JULIAN SHEA in London

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The United Kingdom’s education system is on the brink of a staffing crisis after a survey by the National Education Union revealed many teachers are thinking of leaving the profession because of the workload and the personal toll it is taking.

In England, the recruitment target for new teachers has been missed for five years in a row, and the State of Education survey of 8,600 union members, published at its annual conference, revealed the worryingly low morale of many of those already in the profession.

One respondent said: “Working 70 hours a week for many years has meant my health and family life have suffered. I am getting out before the job kills me.”

The lop-sided nature of the work-

life balance, and the demands of out-of-hours working, were a common theme in survey responses.

“With a young family, and despite working part-time, I have come to realize that a job in education is not conducive to family life,” said one teacher, with another adding “My personal life doesn’t exist altogether in the next five years.”

The size of the workload is also threatening to drive away new recruits. Of those who had been teaching between two and five years, 26 percent said they planned to quit altogether in the next five years.

The union’s joint general secretary, Kevin Courtney, said an excessive focus on performance targets, rather than the creative side of teaching, was one of the biggest problems his members faced.

“So long as the main drivers of a performance-based system are still

in place, schools will continue to be in the grip of fear, over-regulation and a lack of trust,” he said.

“The government is doing a far better job of driving teachers out of the profession than they are solving the issue of excessive workload.”

British Education Secretary Damian Hinds said the government was aware that excessive hours and bureaucracy were the “biggest threats” when it came to recruiting teachers and keeping hold of them, and the Department for Education said addressing these issues was an integral part of its strategy for trying to attract more people into the teaching profession.

These figures come two weeks after a survey by the University College London Institute of Education highlighted similar issues.

Its findings revealed that

although teachers were aware that they were entering a demanding profession, the reality of expectation in the workplace was more than they could deal with, and their morale soon began to suffer.

The survey was published in the British Journal of Educational Studies and contrasted the reasons people chose to become teachers with the reasons they gave for quitting.

Popular motivating factors included wanting to make a difference (69 percent), to work with young people (64 percent), and love of subject (50 percent).

By contrast, their reasons for wanting to leave tended to be more personal. Top of the list was to improve work/life balance (75 percent), the size of the workload (71 percent), and a target-driven culture (57 percent).

Scarecrows outnumber people in Japan village

“We need to create communities where young people can make a long-term living.”

Takumi Fujinami, economist at the Japan Research Institute

den thought it really was my father. ... He said hello but it was a scarecrow. It was funny,” recalled Ayano. Since then, Ayano has not stopped creating the life-size dolls, made with wooden sticks, newspapers to fill the body, elastic fabrics for skin and knitting wool for hair.

The secret to breathing life into the dolls? Applying pink color to the lips and cheeks with a make-up brush, revealed Ayano.

At the local school, she has placed 12 colorful child-sized dolls at desks, positioned as if part of a lively class poring over their books.

The school closed seven years ago. “Now there are no children. The youngest person here is 55 years old,” Ayano said.

Down the street, a “family” of scarecrows lounges in front of an abandoned grocery shop while a doll dressed as an old farmer window-shops next door.

‘It’s lonely now’

While never humming with people, Ayano remembers as a child that Nagoro was once a well-to-do place with nearly 300 residents.

Nagoro’s plight is replicated all around Japan, as the world’s third-largest economy battles a declining population, low birthrate and high life expectancy.

The latest government report shows that 27.7 percent of a population of 127 million are aged 65 or older. According to experts, around 40 percent of Japan’s 1,700 municipalities are defined as “depopulated.”

Young people started to leave for Tokyo in the 1960s, said Takumi Fujinami, an economist at the Japan Research Institute.

“The economy was booming in Tokyo and industrial areas at that time. They were the only places people could earn money, so a lot of young people moved there,” he said.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has pledged to revive regions outside Tokyo by pumping in tens of billions of yen, but this is not enough to stop young people from leaving their hometowns to work in Tokyo, Fujinami said.

“It’s important to increase income or improve working conditions for young people in rural areas. We need to create communities where young people can make a long-term living,” Fujinami said, adding that subsidizing them to move in is not enough.

While there is little evidence of citizens returning to Nagoro, Ayano’s dolls have attracted flesh-and-blood people from as far afield as the US and France.

“I hope Nagoro will become lively again and many people come here for sightseeing,” Ayano said.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Israeli scientists use 3D printing to create world’s first model of human heart

JERUSALEM — Tel Aviv University scientists said on Monday that they had printed the first 3D heart, by using a patient’s cells and scans.

The heart, which was produced in a lab, completely matches the biological characteristics of a patient’s heart. It took about three hours to print the whole heart.

Making a human heart model is a major medical breakthrough. However, the printed heart is approximately 100 times smaller than a real human heart.

Similar to a rabbit heart in size, the model demonstrates the potential of 3D printing technology for producing personalized tissues and organs.

“This is the first time that an

entire heart was successfully engineered and printed with cells, blood vessels, ventricles and chambers,” said Tal Dvir, a Tel Aviv University professor.

Heart disease is a leading cause of death among humans around the world. Heart transplantation is currently the only treatment available to patients with end-stage heart failure.

Given the dire shortage of heart donors, the need to develop new approaches to regenerate the malfunctioning heart is urgent. It seems that 3D printed hearts could be the forthcoming solution.

Research for the study was conducted jointly by Dvir, Assaf Shapira of Tel Aviv University’s Faculty of

Life Sciences, and Nadav Moor, a doctoral student in Dvir’s lab.

Shapira, the lab manager, said: “We take a fatty-tissue biopsy from the patient and separate it to its components: cells and extracellular matrix.

“While the extracellular matrix is processed into a gel, the cells are genetically engineered to become stem cells, and then differentiated into heart muscle cells and blood-vessel-forming cells.”

After that, the researchers mixed the cells with the gel to create “bio-inks” that are loaded into the 3D printer. The printer was also loaded with CT and MRI scans from the patient.

The scans generated high-resolu-



A transparent cup containing what Israeli scientists say is the world’s first 3D-printed, vascularized engineered heart, is seen during a demonstration in Tel Aviv. PHOTO VIA XINHUA

tion constructions of the heart, with patches that match the anatomical and biochemical features of the patient, thus reducing the chance of

rejection or malfunctioning in the future transplantations.

The research is now focused on studying the behavior and functionality of the printed patches and hearts under controlled conditions in the lab and upon transplantation in animal models.

An artificial heart is expected to lower the risk of implant rejection in comparison with real heart transplantation from one human to another, a primary reason for unsuccessful treatments.

“Ideally, the biomaterial should possess the same biochemical, mechanical and topographical properties of the patient’s tissues,” said Dvir.

The researchers are now planning

on culturing the printed hearts in the lab and “teaching them to behave” like hearts, Dvir said. The next step in their research would be transplanting 3D-printed hearts in animals.

Meanwhile, the lab heart does not have a pumping ability. Currently, the cells contract, but they do not work together. There are many challenges before the first human-made heart would be transplanted.

One of the major challenges is to make a mature, human-sized and fully functional heart, and it needs the creation of billions of cells instead of millions as in the small model the university produced.

XINHUA

# WORLD

## Over 190M Indonesians go to polls

Unofficial results show incumbent President Joko Widodo leading race

**By YANG HAN** in Hong Kong  
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One top job post in Indonesia, around 20,300 parliamentary and other seats, and roughly 190 million voters.

In just one day since the first group of polling stations opened on Wednesday in the east and the last one closed in the west, the most populous Muslim nation in the world undertook one of the largest polls and completed the first elections for the president and parliament members held on the same day.

These are against all logistic odds, thanks to more than 800,000 polling stations on thousands of vastly dispersed islands.

The peak of months of drama feature incumbent President Joko Widodo against former general Prabowo Subianto.

President Widodo, popularly known as Jokowi, dressed in a white shirt and accompanied by First Lady Iriana Widodo, voted in the capital.

"I feel relieved," Widodo told the media after casting his ballot and displaying a finger dipped in indelible ink, part of the process of avoiding fraudulent voting.

Asked if he was feeling optimistic about the results of Wednesday's

poll, Widodo said: "Always. We should stay optimistic at work."

Separately, Prabowo, after voting in Bogor, echoed his campaign themes of a weak Indonesia at risk of disintegration.

"I promised that we will work for the good of the country," he said.

More than 245,000 candidates supported by 16 national political parties and four local parties are competing for more than 20,000 seats in the country.

Unofficial "quick counts" were released after 3 pm local time on Wednesday. The counts are conducted by certified pollsters and have proved accurate in the past. As of 3:30 pm, the early unofficial count showed Jokowi to be in the lead.

The official initial count is expected to be released a week after the vote.

The election will showcase how democracy works in Indonesia, the biggest Muslim country in the world, said Siwage Dharma Negara, senior fellow at the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, or ISEAS, a research facility in Singapore.

"It also shows whether Indonesia can balance and achieve both goals — maintaining its democratic principle and also progressing in terms of its economic development at the same time," said Negara, who is also



A voter casts her ballot at a polling booth during elections in Bogor, West Java, Indonesia, on Wednesday. WILLY KURNIAWAN / REUTERS

a coordinator of the Indonesia Studies Programme at ISEAS.

"Indonesia is one of the very few countries in Southeast Asia that has been consistently democratic over the last 20 years and it is the largest country in the region, so the prospects for democracy in Southeast Asia are closely tied to the fate of Indonesia's democracy," said Diego Fossati, assistant professor of Asian and International Studies at the City University of Hong Kong, or CityU.

The Indonesian General Elections Commission, or KPU, has listed more than 192 million eligible voters in the 2019 election, of which

about 40 percent are millennials. More than 2 million overseas voters had earlier cast their votes over the weekend.

Nanik Sri Hartini, a 41-year-old domestic helper in Hong Kong, cast her ballot at the polling station in Wanchai last Sunday. It was the first time she had voted from the city.

"Whoever wins the election, I just hope we can have a president that will improve the economic development of Indonesia and the living quality of its people," Hartini told China Daily.

In response to the recent discovery of marked ballots before Indone-

sian voters had cast their ballots in Malaysia, which led to allegations of vote-rigging, KPU has announced that a revote will be scheduled in Kuala Lumpur, The Jakarta Post reported on Wednesday.

If Jokowi remains as the president, ISEAS' Negara expects there will be more continuity than changes in terms of the country's economic, social and foreign policies. On the other hand, there will be more changes if Prabowo wins the election, including measures he has promised in the campaign such as reducing the electricity tariff.

Fossati with CityU said the link between rhetoric and policy in Indonesia is weak. For example, Jokowi was considered to be a radical reformer and champion of pluralism in the 2014 campaign, but he governed as a centrist.

The relations between China and Indonesia will continue to grow regardless of who the president will be, said Negara, noting China is the biggest trade partner and the third-largest foreign investor for Indonesia.

"I don't see that any president will refuse to cooperate with China," said Negara, referring to the China-led Belt and Road Initiative. "As long as the benefit can be felt by the local people, I think Indonesia will be supportive to further economic cooperation with China."

The official result is expected to be announced by the General Election Commission by May 22.

## Chinese technology helps Cuba drill for oil

HAVANA — The national flags of Cuba and China fly side by side atop a 60-meter-high oil derrick along the coast of the Caribbean island, a symbol of their bilateral cooperation in offshore oil exploration.

About 160 seasoned employees of China's Great Wall Drilling Company, an affiliate of China National Petroleum Corporation, are working on the island as part of a joint venture with state-owned oil firm Cuba Petroleum Company, or CUPET.

"Our deposits extend out to sea, so increasingly, wells are longer and to reach them we need cutting-edge technology that we have accessed through the Great Wall Company," said Julio Jimenez, CUPET's director of drilling.

Great Wall Drilling, which began operating in Cuba in 2005, has been commissioned to drill most of Cuba's oil wells, using high-tech equipment capable of accessing shallow offshore oil deposits from land.

“We have increased the efficiency of drilling, lowered the cost of building the wells, and drilled several highly productive wells.”

**Meng Fanji**, deputy manager of Great Wall Drilling Company

Located very close to the coastal town of Boca de Camarioca, about 120 kilometers east of Havana, a 1,475-meter-deep well extends 4,692 meters out to sea after gradually modifying its trajectory to an angle of 89 degrees. Workers aim to reach 6,950 meters, where geological studies show a hydrocarbon deposit is located.

The company uses four drilling rigs of two different types in Cuba. Safer and faster oil-based mud drilling is used as it cools and lubricates the drill bits.

Meng Fanji, 42, is the company's deputy manager and superintendent of Health, Safety and Environment. Born in central China's Henan province, he has been working in Cuba for nine years.

"We have increased the efficiency of drilling, lowered the cost of building the wells, and drilled several highly productive wells, in addition, we have supported the finding of new deposits," said Meng.

The Chinese company is now working on another exploration well in Celimar, about 15 km east of Havana. This well is 2,141 meters deep and, after reaching an angle of 79 degrees, runs for 5,100 meters out to sea. The objective is to reach a crude deposit estimated to lie 6,300 meters offshore.

According to Cuban engineer Elber Smith, who heads operations at three wells along Havana's north coast, Chinese cooperation has been "fundamental to the success of this effort".

Cuba's local crude output meets about half the island's energy needs, while the remainder is purchased abroad, mainly from Venezuela at preferential prices.

XINHUA

## Trump vetoes bill to end US support for Saudi-led Yemen war

**By AGENCIES**

US President Donald Trump on Tuesday vetoed a resolution from Congress directing him to end US support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen, the second such veto of his presidency, Agence France-Presse reported.

The resolution was a harsh bipartisan rebuke to Trump and a historic attempt by Congress to curtail a president's war-making powers — a step he condemned in a statement announcing his veto.

"This resolution is an unnecessary, dangerous attempt to weaken my constitutional authorities, endangering the lives of American citizens and brave service members, both today and in the future," Trump said.

The United States provides billions of dollars of arms to the Saudi-led coalition fighting against Iran-backed rebels in Yemen. Members of Congress have expressed concern about the thousands of civilians killed in coalition airstrikes since the conflict began in 2014. The fighting in the Arab world's poorest country also has left millions suffering from food and medical care shortages and has pushed the country to the brink of famine.

Vetoing the measure is an "effective green light for the war strategy that has created the world's worst humanitarian crisis to continue," said International Rescue Committee President and CEO David Miliband.

"Yemen is at a breaking point with 10 million people on the brink of famine. There are as many as 100 civilian casualties per week, and Yemenis are more likely to be killed at home than in any other structure."

According to The Associated Press, many lawmakers also criticized the president for not condemning Saudi Arabia for the killing of Jamal Khashoggi, a Saudi who lived in the US and had written critically about the kingdom. Khashoggi entered the Saudi consulate in Istanbul last October and never came out.

Trump said the measure was unnecessary because, except for counterterrorism operations against Islamic State militants and al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, the US is not engaged in hostilities in or affecting Yemen.

He said there were no US military personnel in Yemen accompanying the Saudi-led coalition fighting Iran-backed Houthis, although he acknowledged that the US has provided limited support to the coalition, including intelligence sharing, logistics support, and — until recently — in-flight refueling of non-US aircraft.

He said the US is providing the support to protect the safety of more than 80,000 US citizens who live in areas of the coalition countries subject to Houthi attacks from Yemen.

"Houthis, supported by Iran, have used missiles, armed drones and explosive boats to attack civilian and military targets in those coalition countries, including areas frequented by American citizens, such as the airport in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia," Trump said.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi issued a statement on Tuesday night saying: "The conflict in Yemen is a horrific humanitarian crisis that challenges the conscience of the entire world. Yet the President has cynically chosen to contravene a bipartisan, bicameral vote of the Congress and perpetuate America's shameful involvement in this heartbreaking crisis."

### Crash in Chile



Firefighters work at the scene after a light aircraft crashed into a house in Puerto Montt after taking off from La Paloma aerodrome, about 1000 kilometers south of Santiago, Chile, on Tuesday. The pilot and five passengers were killed when the aircraft plunged into a two-story house and set it on fire. JAVIER DUQUE / ATON CHILE VIA AFP

## India cancels voting in southern area

NEW DELHI — Indian election authorities have canceled voting in a southern region of the country after seizing more than 110 million rupees (\$1.5 million) they believe were meant to influence the outcome, officials said on Wednesday.

It is the first time a ballot has been canceled in a national election over attempted vote-buying, officials said.

The decision comes as Indians vote in a mammoth national election being held over five weeks, the next phase of which begins on Thursday.

But voters in the Vellore constituency in coastal Tamil Nadu state will not be going to the polls as scheduled because the Election Commission of India ruled there were fears of a "systematic design to influence voters".

The ruling came after authorities seized more than 110 million rupees from a candidate in the run-up to the vote.

The commission said late on Tuesday that the environment in Vellore was no longer conducive to "free and ethical" elections.

No fresh date has been announced for polling in the constituency.

Nearly 100 constituencies in 13 states go to the polls Thursday in the second round of the seven-phase election that began on April 11.

Almost 900 million voters are eligible to cast their votes to elect 543 members to the lower house of the parliament, with results expected on May 23.

Attempts to secure votes in return for cash, liquor, electronic gadgets and even goats have been reported

across Tamil Nadu in the run-up to voting.

More than 1.3 billion rupees and one ton of gold worth 3 billion rupees have been seized in the state since the poll dates were announced on March 10.

Elsewhere in the country, polls have been delayed by five days in parts of the northeastern state of Tripura over security fears.

Polls will be held there on April 23 instead of Thursday.

And in the country's east, Bangladeshi star actor Ferdous Ahmed has been forced to leave India after he was discovered campaigning for a candidate from the opposition Congress party, officials at the Bangladesh High Commission in Kolkata said.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

## Thai oil rig workers rescue dog found 220 kilometers offshore

**By AGENCIES**

An exhausted dog found paddling 220 kilometers off the Thai coast is set for a new lease on life after an oil rig worker who rescued him promised to adopt the plucky pooch, Agence France-Presse reported.

Vitisak Payalaw, a worker on the rig belonging to Chevron Thailand Exploration and Production, said on his Facebook page that rig workers

saw the dog swimming toward the platform on Friday. He said they were lucky to spot it because if there had been waves, the dog probably would not have been visible, The Associated Press reported.

There was no indication of how he got there, or how long he had been lost at sea.

But local media speculated he may have fallen off a fishing vessel and paddled toward the rig.

Now named Boonrod, the dog is recovering in Songkhla province under the care of a vet, an animal charity group told AFP on Tuesday.

"Since he came onto the platform, he didn't cry or bark at all," Vitisak wrote.

"He likely lost a lot of body water from the seawater."

The dog made it to the platform, clinging to the support structure below deck without barking or

whimpering, Vitisak wrote.

The dog stayed on the rig for two nights before another vessel picked the pooch up on its way back to shore, arriving at a port in Songkhla province on Monday morning.

In a video posted by animal rights group Watchdog Thailand, the dog was welcomed on the shore with a garland of yellow flowers and lots of neck scratches from port workers.

"Thank you for seeing the value of

a little life that floats so far," said Facebooker Wanna Wongvorakul.

The dog was placed in the care of local charity group Smile Dog House.

"So far his health is ok. ... It's only skin problems that he's suffering from now," a Smile Dog House staff told AFP.

Vitisak told AFP in a message on Tuesday he plans to adopt the now-famous canine once he returns to shore at the end of the month.



A rescued dog is seen after being found stranded swimming in the Gulf of Thailand on April 12. FACEBOOK / VITISAK PAYALAW VIA REUTERS

# WORLD

## Notre Dame will be restored

\$1 billion has been raised to rebuild the cathedral, and the work could take years to decades

By **EARLE GALE** in London  
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France vowed to rebuild the iconic, fire-ravaged Notre Dame cathedral “even more beautifully”, and to complete the work within five years, as donations supporting the work flooded in from all over the world.

French President Emmanuel Macron said the 850-year-old Gothic building will battle back from Monday’s fire, which destroyed much of the roof and that caused the steeple to come crashing down.

“We’ll rebuild Notre Dame even more beautifully and I want it to be completed in five years,” Macron said in a televised address on Tuesday evening. “We can do it. ... It’s up to us to convert this disaster into an opportunity to come together.”

He said the building work should be completed by the time Paris hosts the Summer Olympics in 2024.

“The fire at Notre Dame reminds us that our history never stops and we will always have challenges to overcome,” he added.

But Macron’s optimism was out of step with some experts, who said the rebuilding could end up taking much longer.

Eric Fischer, who led a recent restoration of the 1,000-year-old Strasbourg cathedral, told *Agence France-Presse* that Notre Dame’s rebuilding may last decades. And Frederic Letoffe, who heads a group of companies involved in the restoration of historic monuments, told the BBC he believes it will take 10 to 15 years. He said much needs to be done to make the site safe before restoration can begin following the 15-hour battle to extinguish the fire.



People gather ahead of a vigil at the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris on Tuesday as firefighters declared success after a more than 12-hour battle to extinguish an inferno. MICHEL EULER / AP

Audrey Azoulay, director-general of the United Nations’ cultural organization UNESCO, which designated the cathedral a World Heritage site, told *The Guardian* newspaper restoring Notre Dame “will last a long time and cost a lot of money”.

Remy Heitz, meanwhile, the public prosecutor in Paris, said 50 people are probing the cause of the fire. So far, there is no suggestion arson was to blame and investigators are working on the theory it was an accident.

Heitz said the probe is likely to be “long and complex”.

Investigators started by talking to workers from five companies involved in extensive pre-fire renovations at the cathedral.

But there was some good news on Wednesday when it transpired the extent of the damage could have been far worse.

Deputy Interior Minister Lau-

rent Nunez told reporters 400 firefighters saved the cathedral’s main structure and its two bell towers during a frantic 15-to-30 minute window that, if things had not gone well, could have ended in the total destruction of the site.

Macron also heaped praise on firefighters, saying they took “extreme risks” while saving the bulk of the building.

Firefighters reportedly put their lives on the line by staying inside the burning building and creating a wall of water that protected the two towers on the west facade.

Nunez said experts have, so far, not been able to access much of the site because of the continued danger, but noted that firefighters had used drones to survey the building. Initial sweeps appear to show that at least one of the famed rose windows survived the inferno while other stained-glass windows were

lost. The flames appear to have missed an 18th century organ, but it is not yet known whether the instrument was damaged in other ways.

Culture Minister Franck Riester said artwork and religious items saved from the burning building, which included a crown of thorns that was said to have been worn by Jesus before his crucifixion, will be housed in the Louvre museum while the cathedral is restored.

So far, nearly \$1 billion has poured in from ordinary worshippers and magnates around the world to restore the cathedral, according to *The Associated Press*.

Duncan Wilson, chief executive of the conservation organization Historic England, told *The Guardian*: “Structural engineers, stained-glass experts, stone experts, are all going to be packing their bags and heading for Paris in the next few weeks.”

### Briefly

#### PERU Ex-president shoots himself before arrest

Peru’s former president Alan Garcia shot himself early on Wednesday after police arrived at his home in the capital Lima to arrest him in connection with a bribery investigation, a police source said. Garcia, 69, was immediately taken to the Casimiro Ulloa hospital, the source said. Local TV channel America reported that Garcia was undergoing emergency surgery and was in critical condition. Garcia was under investigation in connection with Brazilian construction company Odebrecht, which triggered Latin America’s biggest graft scandal when company officials admitted publicly in 2016 that it won lucrative contracts in the region with bribes.

#### INDIA At least 47 die in dust storm, heavy rains

A powerful storm bringing dust, lightning and unseasonal rain has killed at least 47 people in central and western India, officials said on Wednesday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed anguish in a tweet over the loss of lives and announced relief for the victims’ families. Tuesday’s storm had winds reaching 50 km/h and damaged homes and uprooted trees and power lines in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Rajasthan states. The worst hit was Rajasthan state, where at least 24 people died, relief officer Ashutosh Pednekar said. The Press Trust of India news agency said 13 other deaths were reported in Gujarat and Maharashtra states.

#### EGYPT Parliament takes steps to extend Sisi’s term

Egypt’s parliament on Tuesday approved amendments to the constitution that could keep President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi in power until 2030, though they still have to be endorsed in a referendum to take effect. The changes would extend Sisi’s current term to six years from

four and then allow him to run again for a third term, which would last six years. The 596-member parliament, which is dominated by Sisi supporters, voted 531 to 22 in favor of the amendments. A date for the referendum has not yet been confirmed, but Cairo is full of banners encouraging Egyptians to participate.

#### NEW ZEALAND Security threat level revised to medium

New Zealand’s national security threat level has been revised down to medium after it was raised to high in the wake of a mass shooting in Christchurch on March 15 that killed 50 people, the prime minister’s office said in a statement on Wednesday. “While the threat level has been revised to medium, and there is no current specific threat agencies are responding to, people will continue to notice a clear police presence at public events, including on ANZAC Day,” Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said in the statement. The country celebrates ANZAC Day, a day of war remembrance also observed in Australia, on April 25.

#### AUSTRALIA Pet deer kills man in rare attack

A pet deer killed an Australian man and badly injured his wife, police said on Wednesday, the first known attack in years. It occurred during mating season when the animals are bad tempered. The animal, a cross between an elk and deer, attacked shortly after the man entered the enclosure on his property near the town of Wangaratta, 200 kilometers northeast of Melbourne in Victoria state. The deer badly injured his wife when she came to her husband’s aid, police said. Police shot the deer when they arrived. Deer were introduced to Australia in the 19th century and are regarded as a pest, with up to 1 million wild deer in Victoria state. They are most aggressive during the annual mating or rutting season in autumn.

REUTERS—AP—XINHUA



上海外国语大学

SHANGHAI INTERNATIONAL STUDIES UNIVERSITY

上海外国语大学70周年校庆公告

(第二号)

七秩春秋砥砺前行，书香翰墨薪火相传。自上海外国语大学70周年校庆1号公告发布以来，校庆工作得到海内外校友和社会各界友好人士的热切关注和大力支持，我们谨致以诚挚的谢意和崇高的敬意！

学校定于2019年12月8日（星期日）举办建校70周年庆典。校庆期间，还将举办丰富多彩的学术和文化活动。为方便海内外校友、社会各界朋友和师生员工参与校庆，现将校庆专题网站、校庆捐赠项目及方式等信息公布如下：

一、上海外国语大学70周年校庆专题网站

<http://sisu70.shisu.edu.cn>

二、校庆捐赠项目及方式

(一) 捐赠项目

1、校庆专项基金。用于校庆专项活动的开展、校庆期间各类学术报告、纪念大会、文化活动等各类校庆活动。

2、人才培养基金。用于奖励品学兼优学生，资助经济困难学生；资助在校学生社团活动、创新创业、参加各类竞赛、社会实践等活动；奖励优秀教师、资助师生对外交流等，如艺术教育建设基金、创新创业孵化基金等。

3、学科发展基金。主要用于资助上外关键领域的科研创新平台发展以及重点学科、重点实验室、重点课程建设等。

4、校园建设基金。包括对语言博物馆、校史馆、图书馆等场馆、楼宇、会议室、实验室、教室、报告厅及道路等捐资建设。

5、校友活动基金。用以服务助力校友工作，为开展更丰富的校友活动提供支持。

(二) 捐赠方式

1. 银行转账

(1) 人民币捐赠账户

账号：1001274409200057626；户名：上海外国语大学教育发展基金会

开户行：中国工商银行上海市上外支行

(2) 外币捐赠账户

美元账号：1001274429148001668；户名：上海外国语大学教育发展基金会

开户行：中国工商银行上海市上外支行；银行SWIFT代码：ICBKCNBJSHI

2. 邮局汇款

地址：上海市虹口区大连西路550号5号楼501室；邮政编码：200083

收款人：上海外国语大学教育发展基金会（请在附言中注明捐赠用途）

3. 在线捐赠：扫描二维码即可进入捐赠页面

三、上海外国语大学70周年校庆工作联系方式

(一) 校庆办公室

联系电话：(+8621) 3537 5661；联系人：毕老师

联系电话：(+8621) 3537 2217；联系人：潘老师

电子邮箱：70qing@shisu.edu.cn

(二) 校友会、基金会

联系电话：(+8621) 3537 2988；联系人：杨老师，张老师

电子邮箱：jijinhui@shisu.edu.cn

热忱欢迎和衷心期待广大校友、各界宾朋相约上外校园，畅叙情谊，共襄盛举，同谱华章！

特此公告，敬祈周知。

格高志遠 學貫中外

Integrity, Vision and Academic Excellence

SISU Prepares to Celebrate 70th Anniversary (Notice No. 2)

With great thanks, we've received warm responses to our Notice No. 1 for celebrating SISU's 70th Anniversary from our alumni and friends at home and abroad. We shall hereby confirm that the celebration will take place on Sunday, Dec 8, 2019 and that a wide range of events will be held to mark this great occasion. We're delighted to announce that, in order to facilitate the participation of our alumni and friends from around the world, as well as our faculty and students, we've launched a dedicated website and fundraising project for the celebration.

1. Website

<http://sisu70.shisu.edu.cn>

2. Donation

1. Intended uses

1) Celebration fund

To partially finance special events, including academic forums, commemorative gatherings and performances during the celebration.

2) Talent development fund

To reward students with excellent academic achievements, help students with financial problems, sponsor student activities on campus, innovation and business startup projects, participation in competitions and social practice, as well as recognize outstanding faculty performance and sponsor international communication and exchanges. The talent

development fund includes an art education fund and an innovation and startup incubation fund.

3) Academic development fund

To support promising research and innovation platforms that SISU badly needs and the development of key disciplines, laboratories and courses.

4) Campus construction fund

To finance new construction projects including a language museum, a SISU history museum, as well as addition and renewal of library spaces, conference rooms, laboratories, classrooms, lecture halls and roads on campus.

5) Alumni engagement fund

To support alumni networking events.

2. Ways to give

1) Bank transfer

a. RMB account

Account number: 1001274409200057626

Account holder: SISU Education Development Foundation

Bank: ICBC Shanghai Branch

b. Foreign currency account

USD account number: 1001274429148001668

Account holder: SISU Education Development Foundation

Bank: Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, Shanghai Municipal Branch

SWIFT code: ICBKCNBJSHI

2) Postal remittance

Address: Room 501, Building 5, 550 Dalian Road (W), Shanghai 200083, China

Recipient: SISU Education Development Foundation (please name the intended use)

3) Online transaction

Scan the QR code below to enter the transaction page



III. Contact us

1. SISU Anniversary Organizing Office

BI Kunpeng: (+8621) 3537 5661

PAN Min: (+8621) 3537 2217

Email: 70qing@shisu.edu.cn

2. SISU Alumni Association/SISU Education Development Foundation

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We eagerly look forward to meeting you in Shanghai and sharing the happy moments with you all.

Shanghai International Studies University

April 18, 2019



# Airbus helicopter assembly line up and running

By **ZHU WENQIAN**  
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Airbus Helicopters, the largest global helicopter manufacturer, said it strongly believes in the growth potential of the helicopter market in China, as it put into operation its first H135 helicopter final assembly line outside of Europe in Qingdao, Shandong province, on Wednesday.

With an investment of 10 million euros (\$11.3 million), the plant serves as the first helicopter final assembly line built by a foreign manufacturer in China. The first helicopter assembled in Qingdao is expected to roll off the production line in the latter half of the year.

Airbus Helicopters, a subdivision of European aircraft manufacturer Airbus SE, holds a 49 percent stake, and United General Aviation Co holds a 51 percent stake, according to the manufacturer.

H135, a light twin-engine helicopter, mainly operates in the sectors of emergency medical services, search and rescue, law enforcement, firefighting and tourism. Production will start with an annual capacity of 18 helicopters, and it could be doubled in the next few years to accommodate growing demand, Airbus Helicopters said.

Prompted by the rapid growth of emergency medical services, public services and offshore wind industries over the next 20 years, potential demand for 600 light twin-engine helicopters is expected in China, the company predicted.

## \$11.3 million

investment in the helicopter final assembly line in Qingdao

“The China market is very important for us and it is going to boom very quickly. We strongly believe in this market. Manufacturing H135s in Qingdao marks the start of a new chapter in Sino-European collaboration,” said Marie-Agnes Veve, general manager of Airbus Helicopters China.

“This achievement is a testament to our continued commitment to the Chinese helicopter industry and the strong spirit of cooperation that exists between us and our Chinese partners,” she said.

She added that a part of open space at the plant has been reserved for potential suppliers, and the plant may develop into an industrial park in the future to meet significantly growing demand.

The opening of the final assembly line follows a cooperation agreement signed between Airbus Helicopters and Chinese buyers in 2016 for the purchase of 100 H135s for the China market. Five of these 100 helicopters will be assembled in Germany and 95 of them will be assembled in Qingdao.

Components such as the main fuselage, main gearbox kits and the rear fuselage will be shipped to Qingdao from Germany and Spain. The Qingdao plant is composed of four work stations, a paint booth, ground and flight test areas, and a delivery center. The site will employ around 40 people.

Currently, Airbus Helicopters accounts for 37 percent of the civil helicopter market in China, followed by Bell Helicopter Textron Inc. Other major players in the sector include Leonardo SpA, Russian Helicopters JSC and Sikorsky Aircraft Corp.

Despite the domestic helicopter sector still being in its infancy and the market scale being much smaller than in Europe and the United States, it has quickly caught up in recent years. The Chinese mainland now stands as the second-largest helicopter market in the Asia-Pacific region, right after Australia. Last year, the Chinese mainland added 82 new helicopters, which is the largest annual increment recorded in the Asia-Pacific region.



A visitor tries out VR products at the China Import and Export Fair in Guangzhou, Guangdong province. PARKER ZHENG / CHINA DAILY

# Nation's exporters meeting the upgrading challenge

## More Chinese companies offer high value-added products at Canton Fair

By **QIU QUANLIN** in Guangzhou  
and **ZHONG NAN** in Beijing

The development of high value-added products with high quality and technology has become a key factor to drive business growth for Chinese exporters, according to Chinese companies attending the China Import and Export Fair.

“Facing pressure from uncertainties related to global trade, a growing number of Chinese companies have attached importance to the development of high-tech products to tap the overseas market,” said Xu Bing, spokesman of the China Import and Export Fair.

The twice-a-year fair, also widely known as the Canton Fair, is being held in Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong province.

“We will push forward digitalization in our business — to develop more advanced but low-cost products to meet demand from Chinese and overseas customers,” said Liang Huiqiang, vice-president of Galanz Group, one of the leading enterprises in the Chinese household electrical appliance industry.

According to Liang, Galanz has registered its self-developed brand in 149 countries and regions.

“We have also cooperated with overseas counterparts to produce joint brands and products to better serve local customers,” said Liang.

According to Liang, the bi-annual Canton Fair, which is seen as a barometer of China's foreign

trade, has helped the company better connect with its overseas buyers.

“Following technology upgrading, Chinese and overseas customers have developed higher demand for the quality and design of household appliances. So we should invest more in the research and development of various products with advanced technology and quality,” said Liang.

According to Xian Jialiang, a sales manager with Galanz's microwave oven overseas operation department, the company's exports of microwave oven increased 10 percent year-on-year to around 10 billion yuan (\$1.49 billion) in 2018.

“We may face pressures from the uncertain global economy this year. But we are optimistic about the year's performance as we are stepping up efforts to cultivate more demand from emerging markets,” said Xian.

According to Xian, the company's exports to countries and regions related to the Belt and Road Initiative increased about 40 percent year-on-year in 2018.

Sources with the Canton Fair organizers said that over half of the companies attending its import session were from countries and regions related to the Belt and Road Initiative.

The fair has signed partnership agreements with industrial and commercial institutions from 33 countries and regions taking part

“Facing pressure from uncertainties related to global trade, a growing number of Chinese companies have attached importance to the development of high-tech products to tap the overseas market.”

**Xu Bing**, spokesman of the China Import and Export Fair

in the BRI, and is planning to establish cooperative partnerships with all other BRI countries and regions within two or three years, according to the organizers.

Supported by events such as the Canton Fair and second Belt and Road International Cooperation Forum in Beijing, as well as the government's other opening-up policies to stimulate trade activities, officials said that China's foreign trade will maintain steady growth in the second quarter of this year, thanks to increasing manufacturing activities, the slow price rise of both imported and exported goods, and the stable exchange rate of renminbi since the first quarter.

China's foreign trade climbed 3.7 percent year-on-year to 7.01 trillion yuan in the first quarter, with exports in March posting

double-digit growth, data from the General Administration of Customs show.

Song Xianmao, deputy director-general of the department of foreign trade at the Ministry of Commerce, said the government will support 20 key industries such as automobiles and machine tools to further build an international marketing service network this year to help domestic manufacturers pursue higher financial returns.

After adding 255 country-level manufacturing bases for increasing added value and optimizing foreign trade structure, covering a total of eight categories of 45 sub-industries such as automobiles, shipbuilding and power generation last year, the country is now operating 375 such bases to further compete with global rivals in the area of high-end goods production.

Li Kuiwen, the GAC's spokesman, said the customs authority has launched a new round of cross-border trade facilitation programs to consolidate effectiveness and further minimize compliance costs and cargo clearance procedures, as well as streamline the regulatory documents to improve service efficiency for both importers and exporters.

China removed import licenses for 118 products, 29 goods import restrictions, and suspended export quota management for commodities such as phosphorus ore and silver exports since the beginning of this year.

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# Lawsuit against JD's Liu may tarnish firm

By **FAN FEIFEI**  
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The new lawsuit against Liu Qiangdong, the billionaire founder and CEO of Chinese e-commerce giant JD, and his company filed by a University of Minnesota student might further shake investors' confidence, and tarnish the image and reputation of the company, amid tougher competition from rivals such as Alibaba and Pinduoduo.

The Chinese student from University of Minnesota, who claimed she was raped last August by Liu, filed a civil lawsuit against him in Minneapolis on Tuesday, four months after prosecutors decided not to pursue a criminal case.

The lawsuit accused Liu and JD on six counts of false imprisonment, civil assault and battery, as well as sexual assault or battery, seeking damages in excess of \$50,000, according to a report from Reuters.

The court filing said JD is “vicariously liable” for Liu's behavior as his alleged actions happened while he was “seemingly” at work-related activities, and the assault and battery began in the presence of two other JD employees.

“We have not yet reviewed the complaint and are not going to comment on pending litigation, but based on the Hennepin County Attorney's declination to charge a case against our client and our belief in his innocence, we feel strongly that this suit is without merit and will vigorously defend against it,” Liu's attorney Jill Brisbois said in a written statement.

## 15.8 percent

total stake that Liu Qiangdong owns in JD

Peter Walsh, an attorney for JD, said in a statement while it was not prepared to comment at this time, the company would vigorously fight against these “meritless claims”.

Lu Zhenwang, CEO of Shanghai-based Wanqing Consultancy, said: “The lawsuit against Liu will bring damages to the image and reputation of JD, have an impact on investors' confidence, and cause fluctuations in its share price. Moreover, employees' trust in the company may also be affected as the Beijing-based tech heavyweight is laying off staff to cut costs.”

Shen Meng, director of boutique investment bank Chanson & Co, said Liu's case won't change his actual control over JD, which is now making some innovations to reassure investors. Liu owns 15.8 percent of JD's stock and controls nearly 80 percent of the company's voting rights.

Liu was detained in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on suspicion of criminal sexual conduct on Aug 31 and later released without charge or bail. He returned to China on Sept 3.

In December, Hennepin County Attorney's Office, the prosecutorial office handling the case announced that no sexual assault charges would be brought against Liu as prosecutors could not prove his guilt beyond reasonable doubt.

JD's stock tumbled after the student first accused Liu in August, and its shares have slowly crawled back since December. Hong Tao, an analyst from GF Securities, said the tech heavyweight has faced troubles. JD's advanced logistics system, which is its core strength, has been overtaken by Alibaba's Cainiao Logistics.

JD is in the spotlight as it is reducing salaries for its delivery staff and seeing a round of shake-ups in its management team. Its chief technology officer Zhang Chen, chief legal officer Long Yu, and chief public affairs officer Lan Ye, all announced their resignation within just one month.

The company said in February that it would lay off 10 percent of its senior executives above vice-president level this year.

# Bank of China kicks off Japan RMB clearing business

By **WANG XU** in Tokyo  
[wangxu@chinadaily.com.cn](mailto:wangxu@chinadaily.com.cn)

Bank of China Ltd's Tokyo branch launched its renminbi clearing business on Wednesday in Tokyo, bringing the global financial center a step closer to become an offshore RMB trading hub.

“The establishment of the RMB clearing mechanism in Japan will provide new impetus for Tokyo to consolidate its position as an international financial center,” said Chen Siqing, chairman of Bank of China, at the launch ceremony held at the Hotel New Otani Tokyo.

“It will also help Chinese and Japanese companies and financial institutions to use the RMB for cross-border transactions and facilitate trade and investment between the two countries,” Chen added.

Data from the Japanese Ministry of Finance showed that China is Japan's largest trading partner, the second-largest foreign investment destination and the largest



Chinese ambassador to Japan Cheng Yonghua (center) and Chen Siqing (third from right), chairman of the Bank of China, attend the opening ceremony of the renminbi clearing business of the bank's Tokyo branch on Wednesday. WANG XU / CHINA DAILY

source of overseas tourists, with bilateral trade surpassing \$317.5 billion in 2018.

Meanwhile, the People's Bank of China, China's central bank, said that around 8 percent of the bilateral goods trade was settled in RMB in 2017 and China's cross-border RMB payment with Japan was over 450 billion yuan (\$67.3 billion) in 2017.

Cheng Yonghua, Chinese ambassador to Japan, said the establishment of an RMB clearing bank in Tokyo will encourage the use of local currency in trade settlements and investment between China and Japan, which can “reduce exchange costs for companies, effectively avoiding rate risks and playing a positive role in developing the economy of the two countries and

the Asia-Pacific region”.

“I think that with the continuous advancement of China's financial reform and the improvement of China's level of opening-up, financial cooperation between China and Japan will have a promising future,” Cheng added.

Yasuo Fukuda, former prime minister of Japan, said at the ceremony that he was committed to promoting trade between Japan and China and he believes that with the setting up of the clearing bank, “the efforts had been pushed a step further”.

BOC had so far opened 52 inter-bank RMB clearing accounts for Japanese counterparts in six of its branches in Japan and over 1,100 RMB accounts for Japanese companies, and the average daily RMB settlement amount exceeded 1.8 billion yuan, said Wang Zhe, director of general affairs department of BOC Tokyo Branch.

“We are ready to provide the most experienced and professional services to our Japanese customers,” Wang added.

BUSINESS

Chinese bike-sharing companies increase rental fares

By OUYANG SHIJIA  
ouyangshijia@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese bike-sharing companies have recently raised their bike rental prices, a key step necessary to support a sustainable business, said industry experts.

Alibaba-backed bike-sharing startup HelloBike has announced that a single trip will cost Beijing riders 1 yuan (15 cents) for 15 minutes, up from the usual 1 yuan for 30 minutes. This means that the firm has nearly doubled its fees.

The move came shortly after Didi Chuxing-backed Bluegogo and Meituan-Dianping's bike-rental arm Mobike announced last month identical price hikes.

"As the leading bike-sharing platform Ofo was reportedly struggling financially since the second half of 2018, competition among top-notch platforms is less fierce now," said Sun Naiyue, an analyst at Beijing-based internet consultancy Analysys. "The previous seemingly utopian model has already been subject to skepticism over its ability to turn a

profit, making investors wary of shared bikes. Thus bike-sharing companies need to seek new options to become profitable."

Sun noted after recent years of rapid growth, China's bike-sharing sector has embraced a new era of stable growth, requiring players to shift the focus from rapid market expansion to refined management and operation.

"Companies need to seek refined operations to reduce the cost and then offer better services to retain users," Sun added. "The bike rental fare hike

may help companies ease the pressure to turn profitable. However, bike-sharing platforms may also face problems such as the loss of many users. As the ride costs the same or even higher than the bus, shared bikes may lose certain advantages."

During the past few years, a bike-sharing boom had swept across China, with colored dockless bikes taking over major cities and offering convenient rental services via smartphones. And the rapidly-growing sharing trend has seen rounds of ebbs and flows amid the

hot competition.

"The bike-sharing sector is now going through a downsizing phase, requiring better operational capabilities as well as more investment in high-quality products," said Raymond Wang, a partner at the consultancy Roland Berger.

Data from app tracker Analysys Qianfan show Mobike has taken the top spot in terms of active users in February this year, gaining 11.57 million monthly active users. Meanwhile, Ofo has fallen from the previous top slot to second with 9.9

million monthly active users, followed by HelloBike with nearly 6 million monthly active users.

Sun Naiyue said China's bike rental fever has reached a saturation point. "The bike-sharing sector's profit model is unclear. It is more likely to see shared bikes as part of the tech giants' whole ecosystem."

"Bike-sharing actually provides a choice for users' short trips, catering to their specific demands," Sun added. "Despite the current crisis, the bike-sharing industry will continue to grow in the future."

What's news



GOVT AND POLICIES

Central bank injects liquidity into market

China's central bank injected funds into the monetary market on Wednesday to maintain ample liquidity in the banking system. The People's Bank of China conducted 160 billion yuan (\$23.84 billion) of seven-day reverse repos at an interest rate of 2.55 percent and 200 billion yuan at a 1-year medium-term lending facility (MLF) at an interest rate of 3.3 percent on Wednesday. The MLF tool was introduced in 2014 to help commercial and policy banks maintain liquidity by allowing them to borrow from the central bank using securities as collateral.

Nation boosts regional aviation

China has expanded the support range of regional airplane models from seven to 13, to facilitate industry growth and bring more benefits to passengers, according to civil aviation authorities. A total of 13 aircraft models, including major models such as the China-developed ARJ21-700 and MA60 and imported CRJ-900, have been included into the support range, according to the Civil Aviation Administration of China. Passengers of these airplane models on regional air routes do not need to pay for the civil aviation development fund, which is a government fund charged to air passengers and operators.



COMPANIES & MARKETS

Renminbi weakens against greenback

The central parity rate of the Chi-

In the driving seat



Visitors try out an intelligent home appliance control system, which can be used while driving, at the ongoing 18th Shanghai International Automobile Industry Exhibition. GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

nese currency renminbi, or the yuan, weakened 13 basis points to 6.7110 against the US dollar on Wednesday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2 percent from the central parity rate each trading day.

Anjuke to enrich overseas listings

Chinese online marketplace 58.com's real estate listing platform Anjuke has teamed up with an overseas counterpart to introduce more international housing information to potential Chinese buyers. Anjuke inked a strategic partnership on Tuesday with online platform Myfun under REA Group, an Australia-based global digital advertising business specializing in property, to help the latter further expand its Chinese mainland footprint. As part of the cooperation, Myfun will syndicate

Australian residential properties, including daily updates on over 50,000 residential listings on Anjuke's platform.

CRCC bags more Moscow metro projects

China Railway Construction Corporation Ltd signed a contract with a local company on Tuesday to build a section of a subway line in southwest Moscow. CRCC Rus held a signing ceremony with the Bureau of Construction Technology Development, a subsidiary of the Moscow Engineering Projects Company owned by the Moscow government. The project involving about 6.4 km of metro line will cost 27 billion rubles (\$419 million). It will connect downtown Moscow with a suburb, and it is expected to significantly ease traffic congestion in the metropolis. Since August 2017, CRCC has been building a 4.6-km section and three stations on the

"Large Circle Line" in Moscow, which will be completed by the end of 2020.

Poly Real Estate sees growth in net profit

Poly Developments and Holdings Group Co, also known as Poly Real Estate, posted a year-on-year growth of 20.92 percent in net profits in 2018. According to its annual report disclosed to the public on Monday, the major real estate developer reported net income attributed to the shareholders of 18.9 billion yuan (\$2.82 billion) last year. Total revenue of the company reached 194.6 billion yuan, up 32.66 percent year-on-year, the report said.

Volkswagen plans 11m electric cars in China

Volkswagen plans to produce 11.6 million electric cars in China by 2028, according to a statement released by

Volkswagen Group China. Volkswagen will cooperate with joint ventures including FAW-Volkswagen and SAIC Volkswagen to accomplish the goal. Volkswagen plans to make 22 million electric cars around the world by 2028. The company also aims to build a wide charger network in China. FAW-Volkswagen and SAIC Volkswagen delivered 4.21 million automobiles in 2018.

New Irish beef exporter approved

Another Irish beef plant has been approved for export to China, bringing to seven the total number of such Irish exporters to the Chinese market, announced Irish Agriculture Minister Michael Creed on Tuesday. Creed made the announcement in a news release one year after he announced the opening of the Chinese beef market to Ireland in April 2018. China imposed a long-time ban on the beef imports from Ireland and some of the other European countries due to the mad cow disease found there years back. Ireland is the first that has been allowed to export its beef products to China among the European countries where the epidemic was detected.



AROUND THE WORLD

Auto production falls on weak demand

Automobile production in South Korea fell last month on weak demand both at home and abroad, a government report showed on Wednesday. The number of vehicles produced in domestic factories was 343,327 in March, down 5.5 percent from a year earlier, according to the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy. It came as demand for locally-made cars weakened both at home and abroad. Partial strikes by workers of Renault Samsung lowered the carmaker's production by about 40 percent, contributing to the overall production fall. Auto exports declined 3.3 percent over

the year to 213,736 units in March. In terms of value, auto shipments fell 1.2 percent.

S. Korea's economy faces downside risks

South Korea's economy faced expanded downside risks such as global economic slump and the faltering semiconductor industry, a recent government report said. The finance ministry said in its monthly economic report Green Book that downside risks expanded on the worsening external conditions such as the global economic slowdown and the slumping chip industry. Export, which accounts for about half of the export-driven economy, kept falling for the fourth consecutive month through March due mainly to the falling semiconductor price.

Japan books goods trade surplus in March

Japan booked a goods trade surplus in March, the government said in a report on Wednesday. According to the Finance Ministry, the trade surplus in the recording month stood at 528.5 billion yen (\$4.71 billion). The ministry said that exports in March dropped 2.4 percent from a year earlier. Imports, meanwhile, increased 1.1 percent from a year earlier, the ministry's data showed. Japan logged a trade deficit of 1.59 trillion yen for fiscal 2018 through March, the Finance Ministry said.

British inflation stable at 1.9 percent in March

British inflation was stable at 1.9 percent in March, according to figures released on Wednesday by the Office for National Statistics. Meanwhile, data showed that the house prices across Britain grew by 0.6 percent in the year to February, compared with a year ago, hitting the lowest annual growth since September 2012. The average house price in Britain was 226,000 pounds ( \$294,794) in February, 1,000 pounds higher than the same period a year earlier. In terms of region, London continued to be the highest with an average house price of 460,000 pounds.

CHINA DAILY—AGENCIES



BUSINESS

Dairy firms eye growing appetite for cheese

Sales expected to boom as Chinese eating habits evolve due to increasing popularity of Western food

By ZHU WENQIAN  
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Cheese is set to become a new growth point of the dairy sector in China, prompted by the increasing popularity of Western food and some innovative combinations such as cheese hotspot and milk tea with cheese on top.

In major first-tier cities, the dairy market is undergoing some structural changes as sales of high-end pure milk continue to expand, and sales of yogurt and cheese surge, industry experts said.

Currently, annual per capita consumption of cheese in China is only 0.1 kilogram, far below 2.4 kg in Japan, 2.8 kg in South Korea, 15 kg in the United States and 18.6 kg in Europe where France, Germany and the Netherlands take the top three spots, according to the China Dairy Industry Association.

“Dairy consumption in smaller cities and rural areas in China is far from the level it could be. Consumption of milk and other dairy products like cheese and butter will keep growing and help to boost total dairy consumption,” said Zhang Liebing, an associate professor at China Agricultural University.

The annual per capita consumption of dairy products in China has reached 36 kg now, much higher than the 6 kg recorded two decades ago, but the volume is still less than half that of Asia and less than a third of the world average, the dairy association said. Meanwhile, to produce 1 kg of cheese, it requires about 10 kg of milk. The cost of milk in China is about double that in Europe and the US, and the cost of producing cheese is even higher, making the cheese products available in supermarkets in China relatively expensive.

“The number of Chinese people who like eating cheese will rise, due to the growth in popularity of Western food like pizza, spaghetti, cheesecake and sandwiches in China. The volume of imported cheese has been growing significantly, showing an increasing demand and appetite from consumers,” said Song Kungang, honorary chairman of the dairy association.

Last year, China imported 108,300 metric tons of cheese, which is nearly three times higher than that in 2011. China imported 6,200 tons of cheese from New Zealand in 2018, a 25.9 percent increase year-on-year, according to the General Administration of Customs.

Meanwhile, domestic dairy companies produced about 40,000 tons of cheese last year, figures from the dairy association show.

Currently, China only allows imports of large packages of cheese or smaller cheese already cut by foreign manufacturers, but does not allow domestic dealers to cut imported large packages of cheese for sale for food safety reasons.

“Domestic producers should pay more attention to the development of cheese products. Cheese wrapped in small packages and snack foods like cheese sticks are favored by consumers and seen as a future trend,” Song said.

“In fact, many Chinese foodstuff firms are starting to use cheese as an ingredient, such as vegetable buns with cheese, seafood cheese fried rice, and deep-fried purple potato balls in cheese. Besides, China has



Top three photos: Different brands of foreign cheese products are displayed during a news conference in Beijing in March. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY  
Above: A child has a taste of cheese products produced by Yili Group at an exhibition in Urumqi, capital of the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. XINHUA

rich resources for special dairy products, and domestic producers can develop cheese based on goat, buffalo and yak milk,” he said.

“We would also like to call for a faster revision of the comprehensive cheese production standards in China and the issuance of licensing for cutting imported cheese. This would help to enable imports of more high-quality cheese, and build platforms for the innovation of more cheese products by domestic companies,” he said.

In addition, cheese has a high nutritional value and the protein from cheese can be fully digested, meaning that lactose-intolerant Chinese consumers don’t need to worry about such problems, Song added.

Major domestic dairy companies have witnessed a faster rate of growth in sales of cheese products than the overall dairy market and that of liquid milk.

Last year, Inner Mongolia-based Yili Group, China’s largest dairy producer, achieved sales revenue of 79.55 billion yuan (\$11.85 billion), rising 16.89 percent year-on-year.

Its liquid milk sales reached 65.68 billion yuan, up 17.78 percent annually. Sales of dairy products such as cheese, butter and milk powder hit 8.05 billion yuan, an increase of 25.14 percent annually, according to Yili’s latest earnings report.

By 2023, sales of cheese in China, including processed and unprocessed cheese, are expected to reach \$1.44 billion, which will be 44.7 percent higher than this year’s expected sales level, market researcher Euromonitor International said.

In terms of retail value, the US is the biggest cheese market, followed by France and Germany. Last year, sales of cheese in the US reached \$23.41 billion, much higher than the \$10.37 billion recorded in France, Euromonitor International found.

Song Liang, a senior dairy industry analyst, said in the next five years, young people born after 2000 will become the backbone consumer group of cheese, and he suggests that domestic dairy firms develop more cheese products, snack foods and fast food cheese products catering to younger appetites.

According to the Chinese Milk Quotient report released last year, currently the dairy consumption of nearly 80 percent of Chinese consumers does not meet national dietary recommendations — Chinese adults are advised to consume 300 grams of milk or the same quantity of dairy products every day, according to the Chinese Dietary Guidelines, but most people are not aware of the guidelines and do not consume enough. Besides, more than 70 percent of Chinese consumers only drink milk and yogurt, proteins from which are fairly simple in structure.

On the other hand, industry experts said China lacks advanced technologies to develop and produce high-quality cheese as well as more varieties.

“The production of cheese is the most difficult and complicated dairy process, and it is hard to make products of consistent quality. Major domestic dairy producers need to increase their investments in R&D and cooperate with more scientific research institutes in the development of cheese,” said Liu Zhenmin, director of the Bright Dairy Research Institute.

“The number of Chinese people who like eating cheese will rise, due to the growth in popularity of Western food like pizza, spaghetti, cheesecake and sandwiches in China. The volume of imported cheese has been growing significantly ...”

Song Kungang, honorary chairman of China Dairy Industry Association

108,300 tons  
amount of cheese China imported last year

Changing consumer tastes to shape new products

By ZHU WENQIAN

Dutch dairy producer Royal FrieslandCampina, one of the world’s largest dairy companies, said it has been working to understand Chinese consumers’ tastes, and is hoping to introduce some healthier processed cheese products to China this year.

Currently, FrieslandCampina sells more than 20 types of cheese in China, but the business scale is relatively small, and it only sells at a few supermarkets and food outlets, the company said.

“We hope to grow our cheese business in China. We have an ambition to increase our market share, and we would like to target all age groups,” said Rahul Colaco, president of FrieslandCampina China.

“Now there are about 150 million Chinese consumers traveling abroad

annually. Many of them try cheese and learn about it abroad, and then they bring back products and ways of consuming it,” Colaco said.

“This will help with the growth of the market for cheese in China as more Chinese travel abroad, especially the younger generation,” he said.

Colaco added that the company fully recognizes the need to educate Chinese consumers about eating more cheese, and said it is looking at developing and bringing in some cheeses specifically processed for Chinese consumers.

“More people are willing to pay for premium, ultra-premium and innovative dairy products. Increasingly, they are looking for healthier options, so we would like to offer different ranges of low-fat and low-salt cheese,” he said.

The Dutch dairy maker said it is strong in the production of natural

cheese, something that is good for consumers as it is free of preservatives and artificial coloring and flavoring.

Current Chinese regulations do not allow domestic retailers to cut imported large packages of cheese into sliced or shredded cheese for food safety reasons, and the company is hoping for a revision of regulations that may allow imports of more varieties of cheese.

Neil Wang, president of consultancy Frost & Sullivan in China, said the cheese market in China is still in its infancy, and there is significant growth potential in the future. Consumption levels of dairy products are closely related to the per capita income of residents and industry development, based on experiences in developed economies.

“Usually, dairy product consumption starts with liquid milk and then

progresses to cheese and butter,” Wang said. “China is still at the liquid milk consumption stage. With continuous increases in incomes and acceptance of cheese by consumers, dairy consumption in the country is set to upgrade to dry dairy products.”

Cheese concentrates all the nutritional ingredients of milk and is rich in protein and vitamins. As a result, its popularity as a food for babies and children is expected to grow, Wang added.

“Besides, women aged between 20 and 35 may prefer low-fat cheese while products with extra calcium will be suitable for elderly people. In the next few years, some new cheese products tailored to the demands of different consumer groups may have bigger growth opportunities,” he said.

Meanwhile, he noted that the main challenge facing the cheese



A quality inspector takes samples to check the maturity level of cheese at the factory of Royal FrieslandCampina in Bedum, the Netherlands. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

market in China is that most products are fairly expensive, retailing at 20 yuan (\$2.98) per 200 grams on average. Prices of imported cheeses

or healthy products are even higher, making it hard for many Chinese consumers to buy cheese on a regular basis.

# BUSINESS

## Tech giants bury the hatchet

Apple, Qualcomm reach agreement in royalty dispute

By MA SI  
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Tech giant Apple Inc has reached an agreement with US chip major Qualcomm Inc to end their two-year legal battle over technology licensing fees, as the smartphone vendor steps up its efforts for the forthcoming 5G era.

The move signifies that Apple is prioritizing the need for a stable supplier of 5G modem chips over business disputes, and the global 5G smartphone battle is finally on, putting more pressure on Chinese companies, experts said.

Apple said in a statement that the two companies had inked an agreement to dismiss all litigation between them worldwide. The settlement includes an undisclosed payment from Apple to Qualcomm.

Apple and Qualcomm have also inked a six-year licensing agreement, effective April 1, 2019, including a two-year extension option, and a multiyear chipset supply agreement.

The agreements mean that Apple's newest iPhone models, especially upcoming 5G models, will use Qualcomm's modem chips. The iPhone used to rely entirely on Qualcomm's chips, but from 2016 Apple started using Intel Corp's modem chips in some models.

When it comes to 5G modems, however, Intel failed to provide qualified products for iPhones, so Apple had no other choice but to put disputes aside and get Qualcomm as its supplier again, said Fu Liang, an independent analyst who has been following the telecom industry for more than a decade.

Shares in Qualcomm surged 23 percent after the announcement, while Apple's remained flat on Tuesday.



People take photos of the iPhone XS Max at a product launch event in California, the US. The first batch of 5G smartphones is likely to be priced above 8,000 yuan (\$1,166) according to China Mobile. REUTERS

“The US smartphone vendor is now putting more focus on having modem chips that will connect the iPhone to the new, fifth-generation wireless networks ... Apple does not want to risk falling behind its rivals.”

Xiang Ligang, director-general of the Information Consumption Alliance

Xiang Ligang, director-general of the Information Consumption Alliance, said the move signifies that Apple is now ratcheting up resources into the research and development of 5G smartphones, as its rival Huawei Technologies Co and Samsung Electronics Co have already showcased their 5G models.

“Though Qualcomm's way of charging technology licensing fees costs Apple a large amount of money, the US smartphone vendor is now putting more focus on having modem chips that will connect the iPhone to the new, fifth-generation wireless networks,” Xiang said. “Apple does not want to risk falling behind its rivals.”

“Apple's intensified input will put more pressure on Chinese

smartphone vendors,” Xiang said.

Chinese tech company Huawei unveiled its first 5G foldable smartphone in February. More than 40 5G smartphone models are expected to be unveiled globally in 2019, according to a report from market research agency IHS Markit.

The first batch of 5G smartphones is likely to be priced above 8,000 yuan (\$1,166), China Mobile, the country's largest telecom carrier, said in December.

The market research agency Counterpoint predicted that the global 5G smartphone shipments are expected to reach 108.2 million units in 2021, up an estimated 255 percent year-on-year, which partially offset the continued shrinking of 4G handset volumes.

## Rules tightened for IPO sponsors on new board

By SHI JING in Shanghai  
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Sponsors and underwriters of initial public offerings on China's new science and technology board in Shanghai will need to invest their own money and hold the stocks for at least two years, according to guidelines unveiled by the Shanghai Stock Exchange on Tuesday.

The new regulations are also an attempt by the capital market regulator to impose stricter controls on brokerages, said market insiders.

According to the guidelines, sponsors will need to invest between 2 and 5 percent of their money on shares floated by their clients, depending on the various sizes of the IPOs, with the cap on such investments set at 1 billion yuan (\$149.5 million). The sponsors are required to hold the equity stakes in these companies for a period of 24 months.

The bourse had earlier said that these requirements were necessary to restrict the number of sponsors with capital and stake limits. Such regulations will also prompt brokerages to choose the truly qualified companies for the new tech board, thereby bringing profits to investors and the market in general.

Yan Feng, chairman of Guotai Junan International, explained that such requirements also help to control risks at an early stage.

Under the newly released guidelines, the sponsors' legally established alternative investment companies are allowed to make the investment.

According to Sun Jinju, research director of New Times Securities, sponsors and their subsidiaries are banned from subscribing to new shares at the other boards in China's A-share market. Similar measures were earlier adopted by the growth enterprise board of the South Korean stock market, which required major underwriters to buy 1 percent of their clients' shares and hold them for at least 12 months.

“Sponsors will come up with a more reasonable pricing mecha-

\$149.5 million

the cap on the total amount that sponsors can invest in the IPOs of their clients

24 months

the minimum time period that sponsors need to hold equity stakes in invested firms

nism for their IPOs due to the new regulation,” said Sun.

Jiang Qijia, a senior analyst at Shanghai-based financial service provider Noah Holdings Ltd, said that investors who hold 5 percent or more in a company listed on the main board of the A-share market are considered as major shareholders. Such investors are obliged to make information disclosures. Under the new guidelines for the tech board, the sponsors may not necessarily become the major shareholders but they will have a say in the companies' decisions to some extent, he said.

With the first batch of applications released in late March, a total of 79 companies have submitted their applications for the new tech board by Wednesday. China Securities, CITIC Securities and China International Capital Corp are among the major IPO sponsors, according to public information. As calculated by Guangzhou-based investment consultancy Guangzheng Hang Seng Advisory, the three companies will have to invest at least 502 million yuan, 362 million yuan and 481 million yuan respectively on their clients.

But this will also put more pressure on securities firms. Leading public brokerages have been busy issuing additional stocks tailored for their sponsor business. Public information showed that the financing plans released by listed brokerage firms have amounted to over 100 billion yuan since the beginning of this year.

### Stock Market Performance



### Gainers and Losers

GAINERS	Close	Daily % Chg	LOSERS	Close	Daily % Chg
Shanghai Stock Exchange					
Taiyuan Chem Industry	5.13	10.09	Yijiahe Technology Co	62.10	-5.42
Hunan Corun New Energy	6.67	10.07	Gansu Gangtai Holding	4.01	-4.98
LiaoningHgyngEnRslnvst	6.02	10.05	Lanpec Technologies	7.47	-4.96
ZhangjiagngFrtrdSc&Tch	6.02	10.05	ZhejngHtCnstrSftySc&Te	10.90	-4.89
Great Wall Motor Co	10.51	10.05	BGRIMM Technology Co	13.80	-4.76
Changchun Sinoenergy	4.93	10.04	ChongqingDepartmntStre	35.85	-4.55
DongFeng Automobile Co	7.67	10.04	Polaris Bay Group Co	15.49	-4.38
Dongfang Electric Corp	15.69	10.03	HarbinChurinGrpIntstck	4.07	-4.24
Bohai Automotive Sys	5.38	10.02	COFCO Tunhe Sugar Co	10.86	-4.23
Sino-Platinum Metals	22.07	10.02	ZhejiangSanweiRubbrltn	26.34	-3.87
Shenzhen Stock Exchange					
NanfngZhongjinEnvrnmnt	4.80	10.09	ZhejiangNaradaPwSource	17.50	-5.91
Guizhou Xinbang Pharma	6.44	10.09	Northeast Securities	10.69	-3.78
Lens Technology Co Ltd	9.08	10.06	Huizhou Desay Sv Auto	30.60	-3.23
GuangdongDowstone Tech	18.88	10.02	BeijingUltrapower Sftw	4.99	-3.11
Shanxi Meijin Energy	18.99	10.02	Hubei Biocause Pharma	7.72	-3.02
Jilin Zixin Pharma Ind	15.71	10.01	Betta Pharmaceuticals	41.69	-2.93
Zotye Automobile Co	6.60	10.00	JiangsuZhongnan Constr	8.96	-2.82
Visual China Group Co	22.45	10.00	Tahoe Group Co Ltd	19.50	-2.74
BYD Co Ltd	62.40	9.99	Fujian Star-net Comm	28.10	-2.67
Guizhou Bailong Grp Ph	13.10	9.99	ShenzhenH&TIntlgntCntr	10.81	-2.61
Hang Seng					
Geely Automobile	18.82	12.83	CSPC Pharmaceutical	15.64	-1.88
WH Group Ltd	9.25	5.11	Country Garden	12.94	-1.67
AAC Technologies	54.40	4.82	MTR Corp Ltd	47.80	-1.44
Galaxy Entertainment	59.00	1.11	Want Want China	6.27	-1.26
Bank of Communications	6.71	0.75	AIA Group Ltd	79.90	-1.24

### International Stock Markets

	Daily Close	% Chg	-20%	YTD % Chg 0%	+20%
Hang Seng Index	30,124.68	0.0			
Hang Seng China Ent Index	11,848.98	0.2			
TAIEX Taiwan Stock Index	10,997.26	0.6			
Nikkei 225	22,277.97	0.3			
Sensex	39,275.64	1.0			
KOSPI	2,245.89	-1.1			
S&P/ASX 200	6,256.38	-0.3			
New Zealand 50 Gross Index	9,982.24	0.7			
Straits Times Index STI	3,345.11	0.4			
Bangkok SET Index	1,674.97	0.9			
Bursa Malaysia KLCI Index	1,620.90	-0.5			
VN-Index	972.10	-0.5			
Dow Jones	26,452.66	0.3			

### Commodities

	Close	Daily % Chg	-40%	YTD % Chg 0%	+40%
Brent Crude Oil (USD/bbl.)	72.13	0.6			
Gold (USD/t oz.)	1277.20	-1.1			
Silver (USD/t oz.)	14.92	-0.4			
Copper (USD/lb.)	2.94	-0.1			
Aluminum (USD/MT)	1837.75	-0.4			
Corn (USD/bu.)	3.68	-1.0			
Wheat (USD/bu.)	4.49	-3.2			
Soybeans (USD/bu.)	9.02	-1.2			
Coffee (USD/lb.)	0.93	0.1			
Sugar #11 (USD/lb.)	0.13	0.6			
Palm Oil (MYR/MT)	2215.00	1.9			

### Cross Currency Rates

	USD	EUR	CNY	HKD	GBP	KRW	BRL	RUB	JPY	INR	CAD
USD		1.132	0.150	0.127	1.304	0.001	0.256	0.016	0.009	0.014	0.751
EUR	0.884		0.132	0.113	1.153	0.001	0.227	0.014	0.008	0.013	0.664
CNY	6.689	7.567		0.853	8.724	0.006	1.713	0.105	0.060	0.096	5.021
HKD	7.846	8.877	1.173		10.233	0.007	2.009	0.123	0.070	0.113	5.890
GBP	0.767	0.867	0.115	0.098		0.001	0.196	0.012	0.007	0.011	0.576
KRW	1134.850	1283.810	169.522	144.629	1477.410		290.070	17.711	10.128	16.314	850.290
BRL	3.904	4.404	0.584	0.498	5.094	0.003		0.061	0.035	0.056	2.931
RUB	63.954	72.332	9.564	8.151	83.403	0.056	16.378		0.571	0.922	48.008
JPY	111.990	126.670	16.742	14.269	146.021	0.099	28.679	1.751		1.609	84.047
INR	69.609	78.685	10.371	8.876	90.790	0.061	17.760	1.084	0.622		52.253
CAD	1.332	1.507	0.199	0.170	1.738	0.001	0.341	0.021	0.012	0.019	

Data provided by  
**Bloomberg**

### ETFS

EQUITY ETFs	Ticker	Close	Daily % Change
China 50	510050	3.00	-0.37
China AMC CSI 300 Index	510330	4.07	-0.17
China CSI 500	510500	6.19	0.18
China SME	159902	3.18	0.35
China Universal CSI Consumer Staples Index	159928	2.75	1.25
E Fund ChiNext Price Index	159915	1.64	0.80
E Fund CSI 300	510310	1.77	-0.17
E Fund CSI 300 Financials ex Banks Index	512070	2.34	-0.51
E Fund Hang Seng China Enterprises Index	510900	1.26	0.16
E FUND SZSE100 INDEX FUND	159901	4.83	0.39
Fortune SGAM Xianjin Tianyi Money Market	511990	99.99	0.01
Guangfa CSI 500	510510	1.64	0.43
Guotai Shanghai Stock Exchange 180 Financial Index	510230	6.27	-0.57
Harvest CSI 300 Index	159919	4.06	-0.15
Huatai-Pinebridge CSI 300	510300	4.07	-0.25
Shanghai SSE180	510180	3.66	-0.03
SSE Pledge Urban Investment Bond	511220	95.40	0.01
Yinhua Traded Money Market Fund	511880	100.92	0.02

# Online education facing new copyrights contest

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Haidian District People's Court in Beijing ruled in favor of Koolearn Technologies Holding Ltd in a copyright case earlier this month, bringing competition for copyrights in the online education market into sharp focus.

The court ordered China Online Education Group, more commonly known as 51talk, to pay the Koolearn 240,000 yuan (\$35,780) in damages as well as 6,600 yuan in legal expenditure.

The case involving the two leading online education service portals can be traced back to the end of 2016, when Koolearn found 51talk was selling its educational materials at 51talk's flagship store on Tmall, a major online market in China, at cut down prices.

The products included an array of English-learning videos, whose copyrights were owned by Koolearn.

As a result, about a year later, Koolearn filed a copyright complaint against 51talk and Tmall, claiming nearly 1.27 million yuan in damages, Beijing Business Today reported.

The court said that the evidence presented by Koolearn could not form a complete chain of evidence to prove that 51talk had gained from the unauthorized sales of the English-learning videos.

Yet what 51talk had profited from was not limited to the sales proceeds, the court noted.

The low-priced videos had attracted more traffic to the platform, which needed to be factored into the calculation of the damage, the judges said.

Facing increasingly fierce competition in the online training market, players are scrambling for high-quality copyrights, as well as more users and training resources, industrial observers said.

The rivalry for copyrights concerning core educational content is likely to become a focus of the competition among educational dotcoms, Cheng Ziyi, a partner of an educational industrial fund at Cybernaut, told Beijing Business Today.

Online education companies

consider their user traffic and copyrighted content as key to their market expansion. At the initial stage of their development, user traffic is a focus, but after the companies have matured, they will turn their attention to copyrights, industrial observers said.

In the language training field, brand reputation is a key consideration that can affect parents' decisions to subscribe to a particular online service.

Thus, the companies endorsed by noted publishing houses and brands of overseas textbook series will be more attractive to online users, industrial insiders said.

Many of the online education service providers have invested heavily in the copyrights for overseas language training books and videos, according to Beijing Business Today.

Increasing the protection of intellectual property is an inevitable path that online education service providers will follow, after their businesses develop to a certain stage, the Beijing-based newspaper quoted Lyu Senlin, founder and chief researcher at the Learneasy Times Online Education Research Institute, an industry research consultancy, as saying.

Copyright is the foundation for online education and key to the sector's healthy growth, industrial insiders said.

Zhi Hui, founder of DaDa, an online English training institute, told news portal iYou that the sector needs to protect IP to achieve sustainable growth.

"Only after creating a copyright-friendly environment can we ensure that it is commonplace for children to use authorized textbooks," she said.

A white paper on China's online education market, released last year by mobile internet industry consultancy iiMedia Research, forecast that the number of online users of education services will reach 296 million in China next year.

They are estimated to form an online education market worth 433 billion yuan by then, according to the report.



A light-rail train made of carbon fiber composite materials is displayed at a rail transportation exhibition in Changchun, Jilin province, in September 2018. The China-developed vehicle features high-capacity batteries, as well as eco-friendly, high-strength and lightweight composite materials. XU CHANG / XINHUA

# China pays heavily to access best IP assets

Demand for technology cost country \$35 billion in intellectual property royalties

BEIJING — China has been lavishing money on intellectual property right royalties with a 20-year streak of double-digit growth amid efforts to close a long-standing gap in technology and innovation.

China's external payments of IPR royalties rose 24 percent year-on-year in 2018 to \$35.8 billion, resulting in a deficit of \$30.2 billion, the latest data from the State Administration of Foreign Exchange showed. This marked an average annual growth of 22 percent from 1997 to 2018.

The fast expansion represents not just the country's demand for advanced technology to support its economic development and industrial upgrading. It demonstrates China's enhanced IPR protection and respect for innovation as well, SAFE said.

## Stronger demand

The payments were mainly in the computer, telecommunications, electronics, auto manufacturing, shipbuilding and aviation sectors. They accounted for more than 40 percent of the total. The United States, Germany and Japan were the top three exporters.

Stronger IPR protection is a requirement of foreign companies and even more so of Chinese enterprises.

Although growth is shifting down a gear, China remains a dynamic market full of opportunities, striving to build an economy reliant on technology and innovation.

In 2018, the contribution of technological advances to China's economic growth rose to 58.5 percent, according to this year's central government work report.

In pursuing innovation-driven development and fostering new growth drivers, China has recorded stellar rise in homegrown innovation on the back of strong investment and better IPR protection.

## 1.96 trillion yuan

Amount spent on research and development in China last year

China's spending on research and development increased to 1.96 trillion yuan (about \$293 billion) last year, about 2.18 percent of its GDP.

The number of patent applications saw a year-on-year increase of 16.9 percent, amounting to 4.32 million at home and abroad.

According to the Global Innovation Index, China's global ranking in terms of innovation jumped from 22nd in 2017 to 17th in 2018.

Qi Aimin, an IPR expert with Chongqing University, said the large deficit in IPR royalties reflected a discrepancy between the country's insufficient IP supply and rapidly expanding demand.

"The data also show Chinese companies have a rising eagerness

on IPR investment and compliance in competition," Qi said. "Though the deficit is going to persist, it will narrow in the long run with China's IPR-related capabilities growing."

## Brighter prospect

A report by the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, a US think tank, showed China's high-tech manufacturing value-added grew from 30 percent in 2006 to 77 percent in 2016.

If this growth rate was to continue, China would exceed the US in high-tech manufacturing value-added by 2020, according to the report.

The report said it is a misconception that China was a copier, as it can and does innovate.

In addition to fostering stronger homegrown innovation prowess, China is assuming a greater role in international cooperation in IPR-related issues.

The country has been active in contributing wisdom to the development of international rules on IPR. Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative is a typical example of this, said He Zhimin, deputy chief of the China National Intellectual Property Administration.

It has established partnerships with more than 40 countries participating in the initiative and offered IPR training programs for experts and officials from nearly 30 of them, He said.

China has also advocated joint efforts with Belt and Road-participating countries in fighting IPR infringements and creating an environment for protection, he said.

XINHUA-MULTIMEDIA

## IP scene

### HEILONGJIANG

## Cultural brand festival to run till end of year

A cultural brand festival is to open in May and will last through the end of this year in Heilongjiang province. During the festival, a map of the province's well-known trademarks will be published, a report on the province's brand building will be released, a high-level themed forum will be held and a provincial brand museum will be discussed, organizers said at a news conference on Monday. The annual event is hosted by the Brand Strategy Association of Heilongjiang province and related provincial government departments.

HEILONGJIANG DAILY

### HUBEI

## Regulation defends world military games

A new regulation has been rolled out in Hubei province to protect intellectual property concerning the World Military Games, which is slated to be held in Wuhan, capital of the province in Central China. The event's IP portfolio includes its logo, mascot, trophy, medals, emoji, promotional video and visual identity system. Organizers have adopted different approaches to IP protection, ranging from trademarks, patents and copyrights to trade secrets and domains.

LEGAL DAILY

### GUANGDONG

## Enforcement officials debut at Canton Fair

Guangdong's intellectual property enforcement officials made their presence known at the ongoing China Import and Export Fair, also known as Canton Fair, which opened on Monday in Guangzhou, capital of the province. Since 1992, the provincial IP authorities have created a comprehensive system to protect IP at major exhibitions and conferences. Their debut at the Canton Fair after the provincial market regulatory department's configuration last year is expected to help crack down upon infringements and increase IP protection, local officials said.

YCWB.COM

### YUNNAN

## Endangered herb identified by scientists

Chinese scientists have identified a critically endangered new species of the herb paris, a valuable herb in traditional Chinese medicines, in Southwest China's Yunnan province. The finding was published in the botanic journal Phytotaxa after researchers at Wuhan Botanical Garden of the Chinese Academy of Sciences confirmed the new species, which was named after renowned Chinese botanist Li Heng. Herb paris, known as "chonglou" or "flower with seven leaves" in China, includes 27 known species and most of them are valued as an effective cure for sores and snake bites. It is an ingredient in a number of Chinese patented medicines including Yunnan Baiyao.

XINHUA NEWS AGENCY

### GUANGXI

## Embroidery center opens in Nanning

A traditional embroidery research and production center was unveiled in Nanning, capital of the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, last week. The facility, co-founded by the Museum of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and embroidery art associations from Taiwan, aims to inherit the intangible cultural heritage and folk art from across the Straits in a modern context, local officials said. Guangxi is home to 22 industrial parks involving Taiwan-funded projects. Some 1.18 million people traveled between Guangxi and Taiwan in 2018.

CHINANNEWS.COM

### HAINAN

## Court divisions created to improve efficiency

The Supreme People's Court has approved the establishment of two new divisions at the Hainan High People's Court, dedicated to intellectual property cases and foreign-involved civil cases respectively. The move will improve quality and efficiency in judicial services and help advance the construction of the Hainan free trade zone, local officials said.

CHINANNEWS.COM



A resident passes a poster advertising online education in Nanjing, Jiangsu province. ZHEN HUAI / FOR CHINA DAILY

# AI-assisted sentencing speeds up cases in judicial system

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Artificial intelligence is emerging in China's judicial system, providing assistance to judges, according to Science and Technology Daily.

The Hainan High People's Court has introduced an intelligent system to standardize sentencing. It employs big data and AI technologies, such as natural language processing, knowledge graphs and deep learning, to automatically pick out key facts in a case and formulate a written judgment, after data analysis based on decisions from previous cases.

The Hainan high court is encouraging lower-level courts across Hainan province to use the system, in a bid to increase efficiency and advance standardization in judicial services.

The move has put the province at the forefront of the country in terms of sentencing standardization. The Supreme People's Court has praised the provincial court for the practice, which has been promoted throughout the country, according to Science and Technology Daily.

"The system is popular with those sitting on the bench at the grassroots level, as the state-of-the-art technological achievement can pro-

vide experience to young judges and protection to the elderly," the Beijing-based newspaper quoted Wang Chunbao, vice-president of the Qionghai People's Court, as saying.

Wu Xiangdong, deputy head of the criminal division of the Hainan High People's Court

vide experience to young judges and protection to the elderly," the Beijing-based newspaper quoted Wang Chunbao, vice-president of the Qionghai People's Court, as saying.

Wu Xiangdong, deputy head of the criminal division of the Hainan high court, told the newspaper, "AI technologies are increasingly applied to legal services.

"As a forerunner in this field, the Hainan high court is making full use of AI technologies to help judges in handling cases," said Wu, who had given advice while the intelligent assistance system was being developed.



A robot serving as a court guide and offering litigation information attracts media attention in Beijing. CAO LU / XINHUA

The system can be upgraded in line with revisions to laws and regulations. Its intelligence is not only due to the use of AI technologies, but also attributed to the close integration of AI and legal practices so as to offer the correct technological solutions in a given case context, Wu noted.

The intelligent system has been granted more than 10 invention patents.

Because judges have actively taken part in the system's research

and development, it can improve efficiency and accuracy in criminal cases, without changing judges' thinking and working habits, said Li Zhengcai, general manager of Smart Security, the high-tech company in Beijing that developed the system.

The system can also be adapted to users' experiences and increase accuracy in recognizing key elements in a case, Li added.

With the help of the system, it has reduced the judgment time in

Tibetan director Pema Tseden's latest movie is a tale of redemption set against the stunning backdrop of the Hoh Xil nature reserve, **Xu Fan** reports.



# Show on the road

Softly spoken, wearing glasses and occasionally prone to pondering, director Pema Tseden may look more like a scholar than a filmmaker, but for years the auteur has been keen on telling stories about ethnic Tibetan life in his own stylishly avant-garde way.

With iconic Hong Kong filmmaker Wong Kar-wai as the executive producer, Tseden's latest and sixth feature film *Jinpa* was recently released at the ongoing 9th Beijing International Film Festival and will go on general release across the Chinese mainland on April 26.

Also as his second feature to go on theatrical release, *Jinpa* received wide international acclaim, exemplified by its award for best screenplay at the Orizzonti (Horizons) program of the 75th Venice International Film Festival in September.

Set in the Hoh Xil National Nature Reserve, which has an average elevation of around 5,000 meters, the film recounts the metaphorical story about a Tibetan trucker called Jinpa who accidentally kills a sheep with his vehicle. He then picks up a hitchhiker of the same name, who happens to be on his way to revenge the death of his father.

The film is adapted from two novels. One is *The Slayer* by Tibetan writer Tsering Norbu, and the other is Tseden's own story, *I Ran Over a Sheep*.

"When I read *The Slayer* from Selected Stories (a monthly magazine publishing literary works), I was fascinated with its narration and the protagonist's way of seeking revenge," Tseden tells China Daily at his Beijing apartment.

But *The Slayer*, which consists of a few thousand words, was a bit too short to be adapted into a feature-length film.



**Top and Above:** Still images from Pema Tseden's latest film *Jinpa*, which will be released for general screening on the mainland on April 26. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"It takes place on the road where the lead character is a truck driver. So, the novel reminded me of my own story *I Ran Over a Sheep*, which also features a similar theme about redemption and savior. So, I combined the two stories to come up with the script for *Jinpa*," he says.

Just like most art house films, raising enough money to start filming was the main challenge.

The idea of the film was first conceived in 2000, but Tseden had been struggling to raise adequate funds to make it until 2017, when Jet Tone Films, the studio owned by Wong,

“You can see that changes are taking place, as art house films attract more and more moviegoers.”

**Pema Tseden**, film director



agreed to finance and produce the film.

Tseden says Wong kept up discussions with him as they worked on polishing the script, and suggested they add a Tibetan proverb to make the mystical story more easily understood.

"If I tell you my dream, you might forget it. If I act on my dream, perhaps you will remember it," the director whispers the proverb, which can be heard as a voice-over line in the movie trailer.

Interestingly, the protagonist trucker wears sunglasses almost all

the way through the course of the film, which is reminiscent of Wong's trademark look. The celebrated director is never seen in public without his sunglasses.

"The prop of the sunglasses is an important way to reflect the character's emotions. Although the detail has nothing to do with Wong, you could translate it as a tribute to him," says Tseden.

A combination of color and black-and-white scenes, the 87-minute feature is screened in a 4:3 aspect ratio, similar to the old TV format but squarer than the present-day silver screen.

"The ratio really suits the atmosphere of the story, which we wanted to give an experimental and pioneering quality," explains Tseden.

A native of Hainan Tibetan autonomous prefecture in Qinghai, Tseden established his fame first as a novelist in the early 1990s but switched his focus to cinema following his directorial debut *The Silent Holy Stones* in 2006. Most of Tseden's films are based on his own novels or have scripts written by him.

With award-winning films including *Old Dog* (2011) and *Tharlo* (2015), Tseden is considered as one of the most prominent directors from the "Tibetan new wave", the group of emerging filmmakers over the past decade.

Speaking about his persistence with art house films and their perpetual struggle for market recognition, he says: "At my age, I just want to keep doing what I love to do. The market for art house films is a niche one. But you can see that changes are taking place, as art house films attract more and more moviegoers."

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## Acclaimed film sheds light on suffering of street children

By XU FAN

When Lebanese director Nadine Labaki was doing research for her film *Capernaum*, she interviewed many children struggling for survival in Beirut and asked them one question at the end of the conversations.

The question was: "Are you happy to be alive?"

Sadly, most of the answers were in the negative.

The children from poverty-stricken families talked about their miserable situations such as being abused, starving and even being raped and were skeptical about why they were brought to the world.

At the ongoing 9th Beijing International Film Festival, Labaki appeared during a screening in a downtown cinema to share her film's behind-the-scenes stories with the audience.

The film which premiered at the 71st Cannes Film Festival has so far received a lot of acclaim and scooped several honors, including the Jury Prize at Cannes and nominations for the best foreign lan-

guage film at the 76th Golden Globes and the 91st Academy Awards, respectively.

Labaki, who was inspired to make the film after seeing a mother with a child in her arms begging on a sidewalk in Lebanon, spent five years on the film, including three on research and six months on shooting.

The two-hour film, which begins with a court hearing where Zain, a 12-year-old boy is suing his parents for bringing him into the world, has many flashback shots to show his sufferings.

In the movie, Zain, who lives in the slums of Beirut, escapes from his cold-blooded parents who sell his 11-year-old sister to an older man to be his wife.

Then, after encountering a female Ethiopian illegal immigrant he is temporally harbored by her and takes care of the woman's infant, but his life is soon disrupted as the woman is arrested by the immigration authorities.

The screening also drew many emerging talents in Chinese film industry, including director Dong Yue of *The Looming Storm*, and

actress Li Chun, known for the hit series *The Legend of Ruyi*.

Speaking about why she made the film, Labaki says: "We can't continue hiding and living as if nothing is happening. I did this film because I want things to change."

Except for a cameo role by Labaki, who is also an actress, all the other members of the cast are non-professionals who acted for the first time in their lives.

Zain Al Rafeea, a 12-year-old Syrian refugee who has lived in Lebanon with his parents for eight years, was recruited to play the protagonist Zain El Hajj.

"He (Rafeea) is in a way trying to survive on the street every day. So this made him a very strong and wise character, although physically smaller than his age because of malnutrition," says Labaki, adding that the child actor looked much

younger than 12 when the shooting started.

She says the teenager quickly agreed to take the lead "as if he was going to become the voice of all those voiceless kids that he was surrounded by".

Most of the other actors also had similar experiences in real life with regard to what they struggled with and suffered as shown in the film.

Labaki says she didn't prepare a



A screen shot of the film *Capernaum* by Lebanese director Nadine Labaki shows protagonist Zain Al Rafeea, a 12-year-old boy living in the slums of Beirut. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

script, but instead the crew spent a lot of time to help the actors understand every detail of the scenes. The raw film footage was around 500 hours.

Speaking about her unconventional style, she says: "I'm not denying the actors' work in general. But in this particular case, we had to just go with the truth as much as we could."

"I didn't expect them (the actors of *Capernaum*) to know the lines, as most of them even don't know how to read."

"So, we needed them to put the scenes into their own situations and start digging in to find the emotions they needed."

"We had to be very mobile and always ready for whatever was going to happen and to capture it. It was a very organic process."

Currently, the film has 8.8 points out of 10 from the ratings of more than 17,000 netizens on the Chinese review aggregator Douban, also deemed a barometer of popularity.

For those who will miss the festival screenings, the film will have a general release across Chinese mainland cinemas on April 29.

# Wild attraction

The second phase of restoration work on the toughest section of the Great Wall is soon to be completed, **Wang Kaihao** reports.

There is little doubt that Jiankou is the toughest Beijing section of the Great Wall to climb. From the base of the hills in Huairou district, there is hardly a proper road that leads up to the wall except for a rocky path through cliffs. And in many places, the wall has collapsed, so walking along the top may lead to crawling as well.

Nevertheless, Li Jingdong and his colleagues from a restoration team have to try walking over this section of the Great Wall twice a day.

“Our tractors can only reach the base, and then we need mules to carry the bricks to the top,” he says.

An ongoing restoration on Jiankou started last June and will likely finish in a couple of months. It covers a 744-meter stretch of wall built in 1606 during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). This is the second phase of restoration of this part of the wall, after the first phase was completed between 2016 and 2017.

It took almost two hours for reporters, invited by the local government, to climb to the highest point of the Jiankou section on Tuesday to observe the restoration work. Li made it in half an hour.

Li, a leading bricklayer in the project and a local villager in Huairou, has worked on the restoration of the wall for the past 15 years.

“In the beginning, I didn’t consider repairing the Great Wall any different from any other restoration work. It was good as long as we could make some money, but now I don’t see it as a general project,” Li says. “The work here is demanding in terms of details.”

### Old facade

Unlike other famous sections of the Great Wall in Beijing that also date back to the Ming Dynasty, such as Badaling and Mutianyu, Jiankou may not be for the passing tourist. Bilingual warning signs asking tourists not to climb this section are seen in nearby villages. Jiankou has never been officially opened up to tourism. But its wildness draws many outdoor sports enthusiasts, despite the risks of accidents.

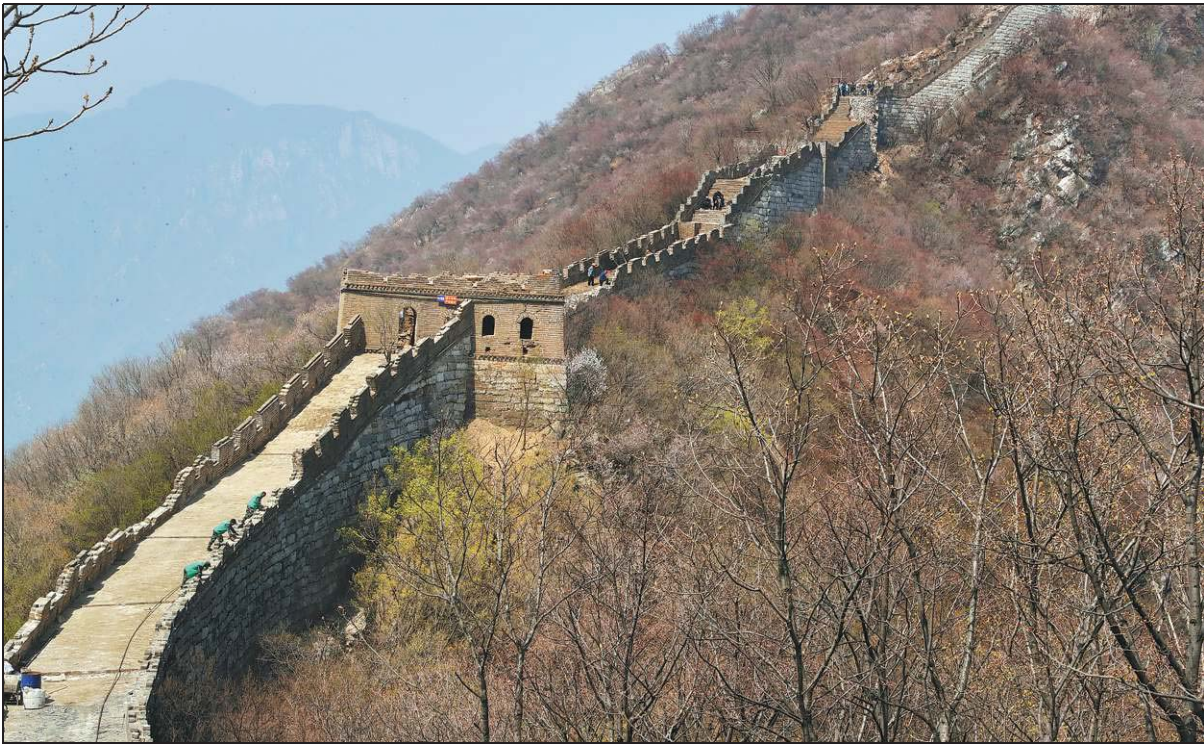
Tang Wujun, a member of an emergency rescue team stationed in Huairou for the last 14 years, who is in charge of helping any adventurers in trouble, says: “In the past, outdoor enthusiasts were everywhere as long as it was a clear day. After the restoration began, that number has gone down.”

Tang says he likes the idea of adventure through the wild parts of the wall but he also knows that unless they are repaired, some parts will disappear forever.

When the first phase of the restoration began in 2016, many netizens posted their regret about losing this “wild side” of the Great Wall. They also had reasons to doubt the work.

That year, a similar section of the Great Wall in Suizhong county, Liaoning province, became infamous after an outdoor enthusiast posted a picture of some restoration work online, in which a damaged area was shown to be roughly paved with cement. This triggered anger online and led restorers to ask themselves if they needed to preserve the original facade of the Great Wall.

“What is the original facade? How it looked during the Ming Dynasty, or the wall’s appearance just before the restoration?” asks Song Xinchao, deputy director of the National Cultural Heritage Administration.



“The Great Wall is a witness to Chinese history and a key landmark in the collective memory of Chinese people. If the look of the wall is changed, memories of the younger generations will also change,” Song says.

### Water and greens

Cheng Yongmao, 63, is the chief engineer for the Jiankou restoration. According to him, a principle of “minimum intervention” has been taken in the ongoing second phase. The first phase still adopted some traditional ideas of using new bricks, like the work done during the 1950s to repair the Badaling section of the wall.

“We began to realize that the best way to keep the original facade is to cure its ‘disease’ and prevent it from collapsing further,” he says.

This time, when it came to fixing one of the fort towers, new bricks were not used, Cheng says, but instead iron supports were added to strengthen it.

Saving money is also a practical reason to use new bricks less often.

A brick specially made for restoration of the Great Wall sells for 16 yuan (\$2.4), but it costs double that by the time it reaches the top of Jiankou by truck, tractor or mule. Plus, to control the quality of urban air, making such bricks in traditional ways is no longer permitted by environmental authorities in Beijing. These bricks have to be made in other provinces.

Having seen parts of the wall destroyed by rain water before, Cheng says his team decided to partially retain some areas of rubble.

“The water will gather again at the same spot,” he says. “What we need to do is to make way for it to flow out smoothly from the wall. We need to adapt to nature during the restoration.”

Water is the main enemy of the Great Wall.

“If water leaks into the wall through the cracks and stays there, it will become ice in winter and break the bricks,” Cheng says.

Restorers have to fill the cracks one by one, using a traditional material of lime mixed with sticky rice.

Another major concern is the vegetation growing on and along the wall, which is considered a threat to the stability of the construction. But the restorers often debate if the greenery should be removed.

“If there was a tree growing on the roof of the Forbidden City, would you just leave it there?” Zhao

Peng, an architect at the restoration site, asks, jokingly perhaps.

“We were undecided for a long time,” he says. “But we are keeping



**Top:** Jiankou, one of the toughest sections of the Great Wall to climb in Beijing, is going through its second phase of restoration. **Middle:** Members of a restoration team climb up the Jiankou section of the Great Wall. **Above:** Workers lay bricks to restore part of the wall. PHOTOS BY JIANG DONG / CHINA DAILY

most of it as long as the wall’s foundations aren’t disturbed.”

### Many approaches

A common rule in the restoration of the Great Wall today: No more than 1 kilometer in length, which means no more than five towers, are restored in one phase.

“On one hand, this ensures quality work, and on the other, if we have new theories guiding the restoration in future, we could try them at different places,” Zhao says.

Shu Xiaofeng, director of the Beijing Municipal Administration of Cultural Heritage, predicts 2,700-odd meters of the Jiankou section will be restored over the next three years.

“In the ruins of Pompeii (the ancient Roman city), we still see marks of different restoration methods over the last century,” Shu says.

“We might see that in Jiankou as well when using different methods.”

More than 8,800 kilometers of the Great Wall from the Ming Dynasty remain today in 10 provincial-level administrative regions. In January, the national-level comprehensive conservation plan was released to guide the restoration, management and academic research of the wall until 2035.

“For those portions that have become ruins, the priority is to prevent or slow down their disappearance. Mass restoration is not suitable in such cases,” according to the document.

Song from the National Cultural Heritage Administration says he expects the second phase of restoration at Jiankou to set an example for other preservation work in the country.

“But we cannot set a uniform standard when fixing the wall. Each section has its own characteristics, so we have to tailor plans to each one,” he adds.

In the national-level conservation plan, more public participation in the restoration is also called for. Consequently, for the Jiankou restoration, some unprecedented things happened. Tencent Holdings Ltd, a Chinese tech giant, donated 10 million yuan, which it raised through crowdfunding online.

US tech company Intel Corp also cooperated with the China Cultural Relics Protection Foundation to help improve the restoration plan by using drones and artificial intelligence.

Cheng says some issues remain. For example, it is difficult to recruit experienced bricklayers like Li. They are paid about 280 yuan a day, which some workers don’t find attractive.

“Besides, the experienced workers are getting old. And even if some new workers are willing to join our squad, they need to be good climbers, too.”

Shu says systematic training for restoration is needed. A Great Wall conservation center will be set up in Beijing in the near future.

“Historical files on the Great Wall can be studied there and we can nurture talent with professional knowledge and practical experience,” he says of the future facility.

But Jiankou is unlikely to be developed as a destination for mass tourists even after restoration, because of the rough terrain.

“It will be accessed by a limited number of visitors in the future like Machu Picchu (the Inca site in Peru that follows a visitor reservation system),” he says.

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**From left:** Mules help restorers carry supplies up to the mountain through rocky cliffs; a restorer checks an old wall brick; and a worker fills cracks on the wall using material made from lime and sticky rice. PHOTOS BY JIANG DONG AND WANG KAIHAO / CHINA DAILY

LIFE

Window to the world

Keen to build on the success of hit series like *Blue Planet*, BBC Studios has unveiled plans for five new natural-history shows scheduled to air in China, **Xu Haoyu** reports.

The BBC announced a slew of new natural-history shows — *One Planet: Seven Worlds*, *Planet Earth III*, *Green Planet*, *Perfect Planet* and *Frozen Planet II* — to be broadcast in China.

The producers of the highly successful BBC Planet series, which examines the relationship between humankind and the natural world while tackling the major issues affecting the planet, have confirmed that five new natural-history series are currently under production.

Julia Noccoiolino, the commercial director of the BBC Studios brand in China, and Chaldean Hunter, an Australian wildlife biologist and filmmaker, who worked on *Planet Earth* and *Frozen Planet*, made the announcement recently at a media conference in Beijing.

Since the release of *Planet Earth* in 2006, BBC Planet titles have become a global phenomenon, with *Planet Earth II* and *Blue Planet II* attracting over a billion viewers over the past three years.

The productions of the five new series are expected to involve over 10,000 days of filming across more than 120 countries over several years.

Presented by Sir David Attenborough, *One Planet: Seven Worlds* is made up of seven 60-minute episodes. The series sets out to celebrate the diversity of life on each of the seven continents, while highlighting the many challenges faced by animals in a world dominated by humanity. By telling the story of each continent and introducing the spectacular wildlife and iconic landscapes they are home to, the series aims to uncover what makes the continents unique.

The series is due to be launched globally this autumn and is scheduled to be broadcast in China via the Tencent video platform and China Central Television's CCTV-9 channel.

The five-part series, *Green Planet*, aims to showcase the “emotional stories and surprising heroes of the plant world.” Due for release in 2021, the show will employ the latest advanced technology like robotics, high-definition thermal imagery, time-lapse and ultra-high-speed photography. The series aims to bring to life the hidden world of plants.

Due for release in 2020, *Perfect Planet II* will fuse natural history and Earth sciences to show how the forces of nature — weather systems, ocean currents, solar energy and volcanoes — drive, shape and support the great diversity of life on Earth and demonstrate how the animal world is able to adapt to what-



“It’s comforting that our work reaches such a remarkable number of relatively young audience members.”

**Chaldean Hunter**, Australian wildlife biologist and filmmaker

ever the natural environment throws at them.

*Frozen Planet II* continues to tell the story of the entire quarter of our planet that’s perpetually locked in ice and blanketed in snow, and the huge impact rising temperatures and climate change has on them. The series is scheduled for broadcast in 2021.

Due to premiere in 2022, *Planet Earth III* has been described by BBC Studios as “the most ambitious natural-history landmark ever undertaken by the BBC.”

The third season aims to keep up with the most recent developments in nature and will see the production team revisit locations from the first season to examine and record the environmental changes taking place. According to Hunter, the impact of human activity on the planet will be covered in two of the episodes, while extreme environments, such as volcanoes and other geological phenomena, will also be explored.

As Charlotte Moore, the BBC’s director of content, explained at an earlier media conference: “These new series will take an in-depth look at specific aspects of the natural world, revealing sometimes-surprising insights into animals and their habitats.

“It’s our biggest-ever commitment to natural history and one we are proud of.”

Hunter says: “It’s comforting that our work reaches such a remarkable number of relatively young audience members. As they are more environmentally conscious than their predecessors, they are not only watching the show but also actively interacting with the content. I think natural-history documentaries will



Scenes from the previous BBC Planet series that include *Planet Earth* and *Frozen Planet*. The BBC has announced a slew of new natural-history shows that’ll be broadcast in China.

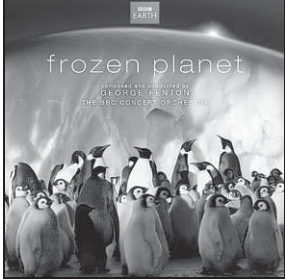
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

bring them a lot of positive energy.”

At the recent media conference, Noccoiolino discussed Earth Tribes, an online community set up by the BBC on the Tencent platform to

cater to Chinese fans of natural history and science.

The channel not only offers some 650 hours of BBC Studios’ natural history and documentary series,



such as *Dynasties* and *Rituals*, but also provides access to online and offline content developed by award-winning producers from the BBC Studio’s Natural History Unit.

Short videos, Q&As, 360-degree videos, live interviews and livestream broadcasts from BBC production locations are just some of the additional content offered to Earth Tribe subscribers.

“We are constantly creating opportunities to generate more conversations with our audiences,” says Noccoiolino. “We want to understand what they like, what they want to see and how they want to see it.”

Since Noccoiolino joined BBC Worldwide’s content-strategy team in 2006, she has been helping producers gain an insight into the viewing habits of global audiences. Responding to growing outside interest in China, Noccoiolino says the BBC has been adding Chinese elements to many of their programs, including the *Earth From Space* documentary and dramas like *Sherlock Holmes*.

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Fans laugh, cry as saga’s final season premieres

By **THOMAS URBAIN** in New York

Three-hundred die-hard Game of Thrones fans laughed, howled and moaned their way through the premiere of the hugely popular fantasy saga’s last season in New York on Sunday.

More than an hour before the episode began, a crowd gathered at Brooklyn’s Understudy bar and broke into raucous shouts as the first notes of the famous theme music rang out.

Almost 20 months after season seven of the show ended, aficionados got their fix and their fill of a Jon Snow cocktail, specially concocted for the occasion in honor of one of the main characters.

The nine most tweeted words Sunday morning all had a link with the world created by author George R.R. Martin, a sign of the immense popularity of the HBO series. The name of character Bran Stark took first place, mentioned in more than 500,000 tweets at one time. Bookmakers consider him the most likely to wrest power and reign over the seven kingdoms.

A number of masks and get-ups were brought to the Brooklyn screening, with a homemade, Jon Snow-inspired costume with strong fantasy and medieval overtones the clear crowd favorite. One young woman with peroxide-blond hair styled after the character Brienne of Tarth brought along a gnashing paper-mache dragon hand puppet she had made for the occasion.

To add a little spice to the night, some fans played a game based on which character would survive the longest in the bloody, deadly world of Game of Thrones.

The ruler with the wind now in her sails, Daenerys Targaryen, was selected by Jean-Louis Baron.

“She must die, so she’ll be the last to die,” he says. “The whole world-building is absolutely phenomenal,” Baron adds. “It’s a great escape.”


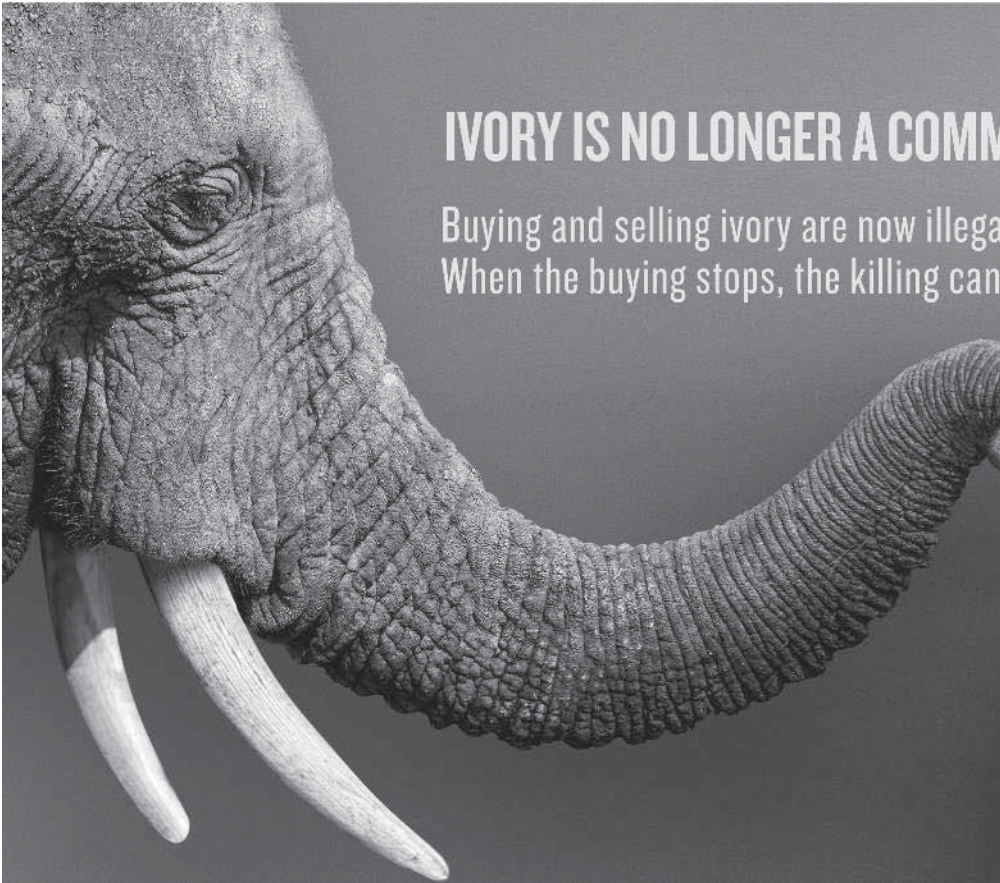
Many choose to watch the richly layered series at home so they don’t miss any of the nuances and have the option of watching a single scene multiple times.

But some, like Robin Akyigit, decided to make an exception for the start of the final series and make it “more of an event”.

The crowd of connoisseurs largely restrained their reactions, but there were moments when they burst into laughter, and at times there were tears, too.


“It was pretty exciting to have them all back after so long,” says Hernandez after the lights came up, adding that he would give the season’s first episode high marks.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE




# IVORY IS NO LONGER A COMMERCIAL ITEM


Buying and selling ivory are now illegal.  
When the buying stops, the killing can too.



SAVE THE ELEPHANTS  
拯救大象

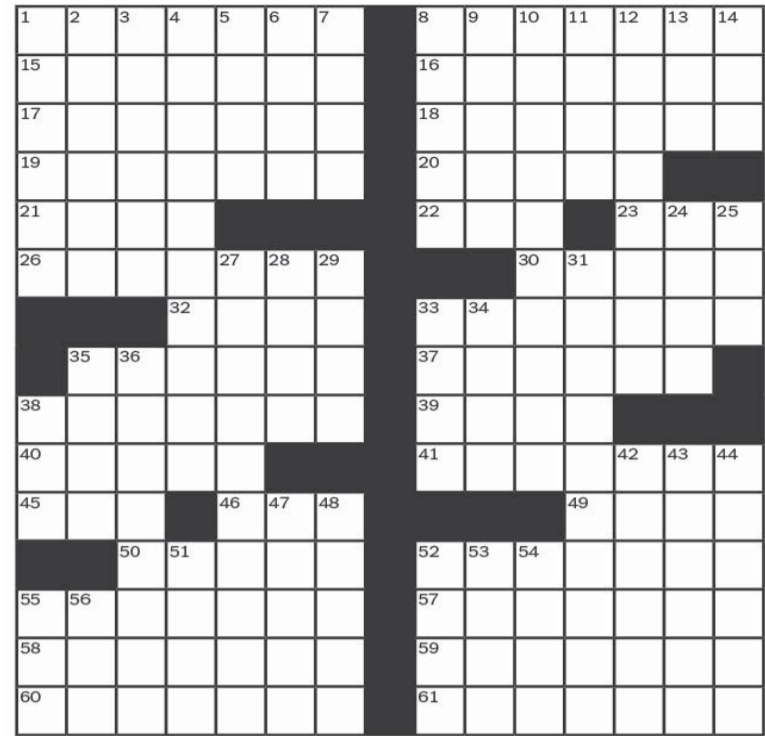


野生救援  
WILDAID



# LIFE FUN

## The New York Times Crossword



### Across

- 1 Got the attention of
- 8 Followers of the Baal Shem Tov
- 15 Author known for the intelligence of his writing?
- 16 Outer layer of a membrane
- 17 Crystallizing substance in Kurt Vonnegut's "Cat's Cradle"
- 18 Conglomeration
- 19 & 20 Pattern in back of a window
- 21 Cut down, possibly
- 22 Cold-weather product prefix
- 23 Reading ability?
- 26 Can't stomach "De profundis," e.g.
- 32 Best-selling erotic novelist
- 33 Germ-free state
- 35 Hit Leonardo & DiCaprio film, with "The"
- 37 Narrow tube in chemistry
- 39 Get better
- 40 App customers
- 41 Cinches
- 45 Boardroom?
- 46 Playing card marking

- 49 Word with full or file
- 50 & 52 Commander at the First Battle of Bull Run
- 55 Kobe or Shaq, notably
- 57 Recruits
- 58 Steam locomotive workers
- 59 Black Panther's co-creator
- 60 Reduction of tension
- 61 Choir composition

### Down

- 1 Chasséd, say
- 2 Withdraw
- 3 Gets a 5 on an A.P. exam, say
- 4 One who may help you keep your balance?
- 5 Lancastrian or Liverpoolian
- 6 \_\_\_ Laszlo (cosmetics brand)
- 7 Not easily understood
- 8 Stacks
- 9 Lumberjack
- 10 Daytime TV fare
- 11 Pass the time
- 12 Prepare, as hides for tanning
- 13 Org. that supported the Good Friday Agreement
- 14 "Scrumptious!"
- 24 Razor cut
- 25 May and others, for short
- 27 Hard to hear, perhaps
- 28 Quick pace
- 29 A good one is hard to crack
- 31 Underground activity
- 33 Australian Open winner
- 34 W.W. II weapon
- 35 Full of sass
- 36 Gap in a schedule
- 38 Lightweight boxer?
- 42 Brawl in the backwoods
- 43 Possible candidate for a Razzie Award
- 44 Has a funny feeling
- 47 Like atoms with complete valence shells
- 48 Inherently
- 51 Stomach
- 52 The new girl on Fox's "New Girl"
- 53 Disfavoring
- 54 Group with a tartan
- 55 Subject of many '60s hits?
- 56 Had something

### Yesterday's solution



## Comics

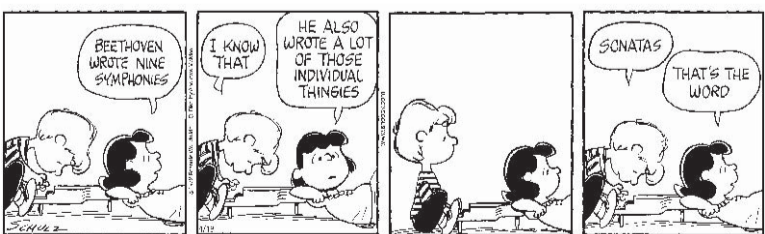
### DILBERT



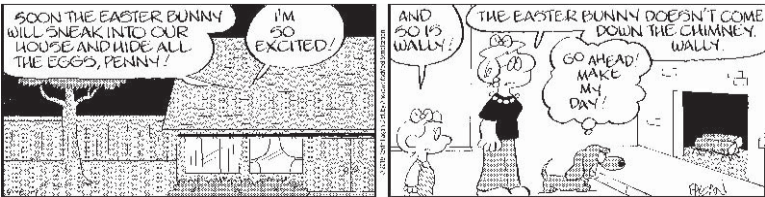
### F-MINUS



### PEANUTS



### DRABBLE



## Horoscope



### Capricorn (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

Look for ways to improve your home or relationships with family or co-workers. Reaching out in good faith will lead to a tempting opportunity.



### Aquarius (JAN. 20-FEB. 19)

Money matters, home improvement and charitable acts will inspire you to contribute more to your community. An unexpected opportunity will develop.



### Pisces (FEB. 20-MARCH 20)

Dream big, but stick to basics and live within your means. Know your limitations and how to deal with conflict and troublemakers.



### Aries (MARCH 21-APRIL 19)

Don't let an emotional challenge ruin your day. Face facts and make changes that will encourage you to move out of the shade and into the sun. Present what you have to offer.



### Taurus (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

Think twice before you challenge an opponent. Go over his or her motives and consider how you can work with, instead of against, the inevitable. Compromise may be necessary.



### Gemini (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

Take a warning offered by someone close to you seriously. If you are too willing to help outsiders, you will end up in a vulnerable position. Use your skills and enthusiasm to get ahead.



### Cancer (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

Use your irresistible charm appropriately. If you take advantage of someone's vulnerability, you will hurt your reputation. Offer positive reinforcement and support to gain respect.



### Leo (JULY 23-AUG. 22)

Be smart regarding matters that could affect your home or community. Be willing to go the distance and make adjustments that are in everyone's best interest.



### Virgo (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

Listen and learn. Someone who has a unique way of thinking or doing things will inspire you to make a lifestyle or professional adjustment.



### Libra (SEPT. 23-OCT. 23)

Don't let uncertainty set in if someone offers information that doesn't make sense. Call on an expert to break down what you've been told so you can make the best choice.



### Scorpio (OCT. 24-NOV. 22)

Don't let the actions of others influence you. Head in a direction that is conducive to learning and developing skills you can use to bring about personal change that will make you happy.



### Sagittarius (NOV. 23-DEC. 21)

You'll be encouraged to make a personal change. The manner in which you treat others will lead to an offer that is worth considering.

## Bridge

This year, several books have been published that are aimed at strong players. First, let's look at *Tricks of the Trade* by Larry Cohen. It is subtitled strategic thinking for advanced bridge. It contains 14 articles that appeared in The Bridge World magazine dating back to 1998, when Cohen was at his peak, winning 25 national championships. He and David Berkowitz also came very close to capturing the 1998 World Open Pairs title.

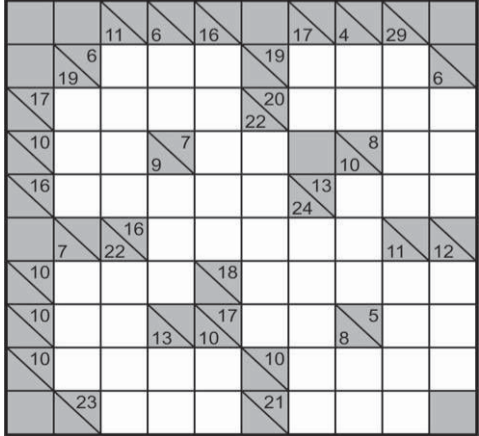
The articles read like fireside chats as Cohen explains how to improve your game. One recommendation is to stay out of the newspapers; except, I assume, when being mentioned as a winner. Look at the North-South hands in this deal taken from a top-rank pairs tournament. How would you try for an overtrick in five hearts? West leads the diamond queen; you win with the ace and cash the heart ace, both opponents following.

North's four-diamond rebid was a splinter, showing heart support and a singleton (or

		North	
		♦ Q 10 6 4	
		♥ 10 9 5 3 2	
		♦ 7	
West		♠ K 9 5	
		♥ 7	
		♦ Q J 9 5 4	
		♠ 9 7 5 4	
		South	
		♦ A 3	
		♥ A K Q J 6 4	
		♦ A 8	
		♠ K J 2	
		Dealer: South	
South:		Vulnerable: Both	
2♣		Pass	
2♥		Pass	
		West:	
		2♦	
		Pass	
		North:	
		4♣	
		Pass	
		East:	
		Pass	
		Pass	
		Opening lead: ♦ Q	

void) in diamonds. Five hearts was a quantitative slam-try, which North sensibly declined with only two queens. You could try for an endplay if an opponent has the club ace singleton or doubleton, but that is so unlikely with seven clubs missing. Against an expert at trick three, it is much better to lead your spade three. West is almost certain to play a smooth second hand low, hoping you have ace-third of spades and a guess to make. Here, though, you will put up dummy's queen and gain an overtrick that will be worth a bushel of matchpoints.

## Kakuro



A Kakuro consists of a playing area of filled and empty cells similar to a crossword puzzle. Some black cells contain a diagonal slash from top left to bottom right with numbers in them, called "the clues". A number in the top right corner relates to an "across" clue and one in the bottom left a "down" clue. The object of a Kakuro is to insert digits from one to nine into the white cells to total the clue associated with it. However no digit can be duplicated in an entry.

5	8	9		2	1	3	
1	4	8	9	6	5	2	7
	1	4	7		1	3	2
	3	7	8	9	4	2	1
7	5		2	4	1	5	3
9	7		6	8	2	3	1
8	6	9			5	8	9
	2	6	9	8	3	7	4
		1	5	2		9	6

### Yesterday's solution

## Language tips

### THE ANALECTS OF CONFUCIUS

子以四教：文，行(1)，忠，信。

The Master taught four things: culture, conduct, faithfulness and trustworthiness.

### 【译文】

孔子用四种内容教育学生：历代文献，社会生活的实践，对待别人的忠心，与人交际的信实。

### 【注释】

(1)行：作名词用，旧读去声。

子曰：“圣人，吾不得而见之矣；得见君子者，斯可矣。”子曰：“善人，吾不得而见之矣；得见有恒(1)者，斯可矣。”亡而为有，虚而为盈，约而为泰(2)，难乎有恒矣。

I cannot hope, said the Master, to see a sage, but only a cultured man, nor can I hope to see a man of men, but only a consistent one. A consistent man will not take nothing for something, nor the empty for the full, nor the poor for the rich. Otherwise, he cannot be called a consistent man.

### 【译文】

孔子说：“圣人，我不能看见了；能看见君子，就可以了。”又说：“善人，我不能看见了，能看见有一定操守的人，就可以了。本来没有，却装做有；本来空虚，却装做充足；本来穷困，却要豪华，这样的人便难于保持一定操守了。”

### 【注释】

(1)有恒：这个“恒”字和《孟子·梁惠王上》的“无恒产而有恒心”的“恒”是一个意义。(2)泰：这“泰”字和《国语·晋语》的“恃其富宠，以泰于国”、《荀子·议兵篇》的“用财欲泰”的“泰”同义，用度豪华而不吝惜的意思。



### BETTER ENGLISH

白人民族主义

White nationalism

请看例句：

Facebook Inc recently banned praise, support and representation of white nationalism and white separatism on its social media platforms. The policy was enforced since April 1, the social media giant said, and has applied to both the core Facebook app and Instagram.

社交媒体巨头脸书公司宣布，禁止用户在该平台上发布任何宣扬、支持和表现白人民族主义和白人分裂主义的内容。该政策已开始执行，对脸书核心应用以及Instagram均适用。

除了禁止"白人至上(white supremacy)"内容，脸书还将进一步提高对恐怖组织发布的内容的鉴别和过滤能力(improve its ability to identify and block material from terrorist groups)。

2018年，脸书平台共删除1400万条与恐怖主义相关的内容(remove 14 million pieces of terrorist content)，而恐怖主义相关内容的数量仍在增长。

脸书出台这个新政策与新西兰发生的恶性枪击案有关。3月15日，新西兰南岛克赖斯特彻奇市两座清真寺(mosque)发生重大枪击事件，导致50人死亡，多人受伤。

枪手行凶的同时还在脸书、推特、YouTube等社交媒体平台上直播杀戮的过程(streamed the massacre live on social media platforms)，相关视频信息迅速传播。

脸书上，一个枪击案相关视频在下架前被浏览了4000多次(a video of the attack was viewed more than 4,000 times before being taken down)。

很多人指责社交媒体平台助长了暴力的转播，且在暴力视频出现后应对速度迟缓。包括新西兰总理杰辛达·阿德恩在内的多个国家的领导人呼吁，社交媒体公司对出现在它们平台的极端内容要负更大责任(call on social media companies to take more responsibility for the extremist material posted on their platforms)。

阿德恩表示，社交网络"是发布者而不仅仅是传话者(social networks are the publisher not just the postman)"。

### 相关词汇

白人至上 white supremacy

白人分裂主义 white separatism

潜在责任 potential liability

仇恨团体 hate group

To learn more hot words, please log on to <http://language.chinadaily.com.cn/>. Follow us on weibo at <http://weibo.com/languagetips>



ChinaDaily  
手机报免费体验

MOSAIC

Of Quasimodo, Esmeralda, Notre Dame and beyond

A fast-moving fire that blazed for several hours and consumed the iconic more than 800-year-old Notre Dame Cathedral on Monday



OP Rana  
Second Thoughts

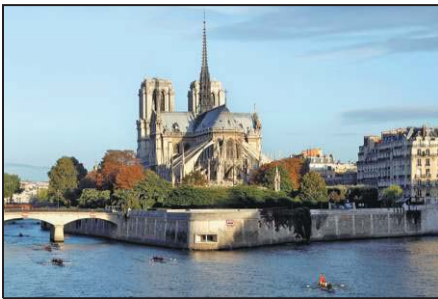
has changed the Paris skyline, and evoked an out-pouring of sorrow and shock from people across the world. The blazing flames, which probably started from the scaffold-ing put up for the cathedral's renova-tion, burst rapidly through the roof of the emblematic Parisian struc-ture before bringing down its famed spire.

The blaze seems to have brought out the best in humanity with sev-eral countries and corporations

promising to help France rebuild the cathedral made famous by Vic-tor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*.

France's three wealthiest families have launched a fundraising cam-paign to rebuild the cathedral that has already garnered more than \$700 million. Luxury giants LVMH Group (Louis Vuitton), Kering (which owns Gucci, Yves Saint Lau-rent and other luxury brands) and L'Oreal have pledged a combined 500 million euros (\$565 million).

While French President Emma-nuel Macron has promised to rebuild Notre Dame Cathedral in five years, Pope Francis has said he shared the grief of the French peo-ple mourning the destruction of the cathedral. Many other world leaders have offered their condo-lences to Macron.



Notre Dame in Paris before a fire that devastated the cathedral on Monday. BENOIT TESSIER / REUTERS

True, Notre Dame Cathedral is part of French history and culture, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is right to mourn the damage to the cathedral but far from television cameras damage is being done to

our environment as almost every second we lose a part of our living heritage. From the evergreen rainforests in the Amazon and Southeast Asia, to the melting ice in Antarctica and the Arctic to the vanishing species and subspecies of fauna and flora, the footprint of mankind is leav-

ing a mark.

Is it because Hugo's "prophecy" that the hunchback Quasimodo's bones turned into dust will ulti-mately kindle the fire that will raze Notre Dame Cathedral has come

true? Is it because Esmeralda, a symbol of beauty and compassion — and therefore a symbol of Mother Nature — was charged with the murder of the very man she loved and thought would protect her, and sentenced to be hanged? Or is it because of Claude Frollo's lust for Esmeralda (the same lust that cor-porations have for natural resourc-es and profits) and his designs to "conquer" her led to Quasimodo's sentence to be lashed in public?

Incidentally, Hugo wrote the nov-el to remind his contemporaries and the ruling elites of the importance of Gothic architecture (read "old struc-tures"), which were either neglected or razed and often replaced by new buildings or "modern" facades. By doing so, didn't Hugo warn us not to destroy the established natural order of the planet?

All life on the planet, except human life, is under threat, from the polar ice sheets to the glaciers, from the large vertebrates to bats, birds, bees and butterflies, from fish and reptiles to trees and plants, and from mighty rivers to lakes and wetlands. And all these are iconic heritages, heritages on which our very survival depends.

How many corporations and countries have come forward to donate millions of dollars for their upkeep or to save them?

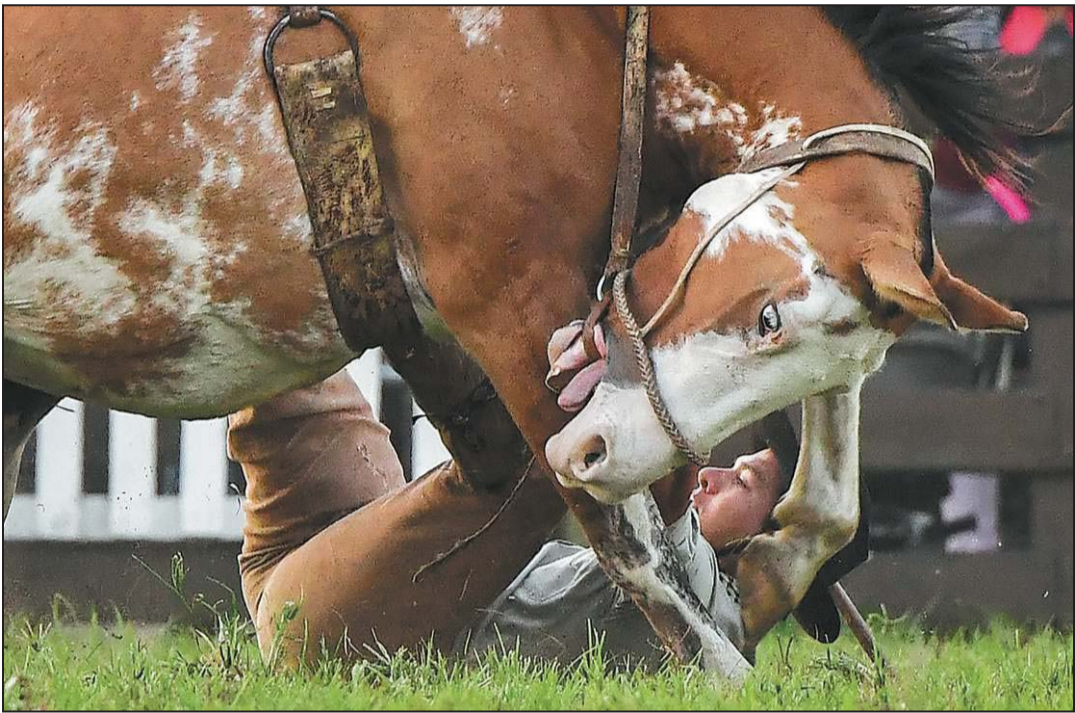
Are we humans enamored, if not obsessed, by man-made structures to such an extent that we can neglect natural heritages to the point of committing a crime, for which we can never be pardoned?

Contact the writer at oprana@chinadaily.com.cn

Candid camera: Horse play

A gaucho is thrown from a bucking colt during rodeo week in Uruguay's capital Montevideo on Sunday.

PABLO PORCIUNCULA BRUNE / AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



This Day, That Year



**Editor's note:** This year marks the 70th anniversary of the found-ing of New China.

On April 18, 1990, the Central Com-mittee of the Communist Party of Chi-na and the State Council announced the development plan for Pudong in Shanghai, which is now the Pudong New Area, as seen in the item from China Daily.

Thursday marks its 29th anniversa-ry. The area has risen from rural farmland to become an engine for economic and social development in

the city and the nation.

During recent decades, with the area's skyline changing rapidly, Pudong, on the east bank of the Huangpu River, has become an inter-national financial, shipping and trad-ing center for Shanghai and China.

It has been transformed into an outward-looking and modern urban district with multiple functions.

Pudong New Area is a symbol of China's reform and opening-up.

Compared with 1990, the GDP in Pudong has risen from 6 billion yuan (\$894 million) to 1 trillion yuan last year. This year, the number is expect-ed to grow by 8 percent.

In September 2013, the China (Shanghai) Pilot Free Trade Zone, the first of its kind, was established in Pudong. It is an experimental field for

reforms in the financial and other sectors. The large number of overseas companies that have established bases in the Shang-hai FTZ demon-strates the allure of the zone.

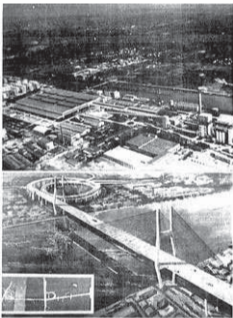
By June, there were 55,000 newly registered com-pa-nies, 20 percent of which were joint ventures.

During the very early days, only 5 percent of the companies in the zone were joint ventures.

Shanghai authorities have pledged to continue advancing the develop-

Programme endorsed to develop Shanghai

Li meets C. African president



The Pudong area is in the east part of Shanghai separated from the west by the city's Huangpu River. This South view shows a view of Pudong from a Western view.

ment of the pilot zone to widen open-ing-up. A total of 127 systematic innovations first implemented in the FTZ have been promoted nationwide over the past five years.

The newspaper and beyond

On our Sina Weibo

PLA Navy Surface Force is an online hit

Tuesday marks the 70th anniversary of the PLA Navy. It is composed of five branches: the Submarine Force, the Surface Force, the Coastal Defense Force, the Marine Corps and the Naval Air Force. The Navy recently posted a video on social media featuring its Surface Force.



Sharing hotpot restaurant brings people together

A sharing hotpot restaurant in Chengdu, Sichuan province, has proved popular among younger people, especially singles, as it provides an opportunity to meet people and make friends. The restaurant has a strict rule that any two single diners should be of the opposite sex. The owner of the restaurant, Chen Xiaoyu, told the video-sharing site Pear Video that the restaurant gives singles a perfect opportunity to make friends and enjoy good food together.

Town yields 73 percent of world's pearls

Shanxiahu town in Zhejiang province is known as the "hometown of pearls". It is one of the world's largest producers and suppliers of freshwater pearls. It accounts for 80 percent of China's freshwater pearls and 73 percent of the world's. Its pearl industry saw sales of 40 billion yuan (\$6 billion) last year. Local enterprises have embraced the bigger market through cross-border e-commerce.



Online Scan to read more on our Sina Weibo page

On chinadaily.com.cn

Video: Top US director praises animation films

"I'd like to see more films made in China reaching out to the world," director Rob Minkoff and jury president said at the 2019 Beijing International Film Festival. Minkoff, from the United States, added that the Chi-nese animation industry has grown vigorously over the past decade. "I've seen improve-ments made in the quality of the animation, the production and the filmmaking." Besides the animated adaptation of *Wolf Totem*, he revealed to our website that he is working on a "secret" project inspired by Chinese culture. Best known for the celebrated Disney classic *The Lion King*, he has also directed a number of animated films including *Stuart Little* and *The Haunted Mansion*.

Trends: Plays reach out to theater audiences

As experimental art, immersive theater has seen its popularity soar among an increasingly sophisticated audience in cities, such as Shanghai, Nanjing and Hangzhou. Unlike traditional theater, immersive theater

removes the stage and brings audiences into the performance itself. In Shanghai, a total of 11 immersive or interactive theater productions were staged last year, including the award-win-ning *Sleep No More*, a copro-duction between Britain's Punchdrunk International and China's SMG Live.



People: Gardener plants special seeds of love

Gardener Qiu Yamin has cre-ated a real green treat for her two daughters in Chengdu, Sichuan province. Qiu always wanted to have her own garden, and at the end of 2016 she rented about 4 hectares of land in the city to build a nursery garden. Qiu shares her gardening know-ledge with nearly 1 million fans online, and she hopes her gar-den can bring happiness to vis-it-ors. In the eyes of Qiu, plants can convey powerful emotions.

Rankings: Airlines fly high in cleanliness list

Japan's All Nippon Airways topped the list as the cleanest airline in the world, with China's EVA Air in second place. Cathay Pacific came in sixth and Hainan Airlines claimed ninth spot, according to a report by UK aviation research consultancy Skytrax. Passengers were asked to rate the standard and quality of cabin cleanliness, seats, tables, carpets, cabin panels and washrooms, Skytrax said.

Travel: Indonesia to lure Chinese visitors

Indonesia has rolled out 10 new destinations to woo Chinese travelers. They include Lake Toba, Tanjung Kelayang and Kepulauan Seribu. Trips to the new destinations are now avail-able on major Chinese travel agencies, such as Ctrip. Indone-sia aims to attract 3.57 million Chinese tourists this year.

Online Scan to read more on chinadaily.com.cn



What's on

Troye Sivan: The Bloom Tour Live in Shanghai 2019

When: April 22, 8 pm Where: Mercedes-Benz Arena, Shanghai

Pop prince Troye Sivan is bringing his The Bloom Tour to Shanghai and will perform at the Mercedes-Benz Arena, fol-lowing the release of his criti-cally acclaimed sophomore album *Bloom*.

Born in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 1995, Troye was a child star in his adopted home-town of Perth, Australia. Home-schooled, he began singing and acting at a young age, but his biggest break came when he appeared as a young Wolverine in 2009's *X-Men Origins: Wol-verine*.

Troye also showcases his act-ing talents in the 2018 film, *Boy Erased*, alongside award-win-ning stars Nicole Kidman and Russell Crowe.

His debut album, 2015's *Blue Neighbourhood*, introduced him to the pop mainstream, landing in the Billboard Top 10 with the singles *Wild* and *Youth* he issued last year and the single *My My My!*, which went platinum in Australia and entered the US Top 100. Addi-tional singles *Bloom* and the Ariana Grande-assisted *Dance to This* followed.

That Physics Show

When: April 20 and 21, 7:30 pm Where: Super Theater, Beijing

Based on hundreds of experi-ments that are presented at science conferences and in classrooms across the country, *That Physics Show* features segments on motion, momen-tum, vacuum, friction, energy, density, fluid motion, sound waves and vibration, light waves, temperature and much more from our incredible world: a world controlled by physics.

Strawberry Music Festival Shanghai 2019

When: April 26-28, 1 pm Where: Shanghai Rugby Football Club

Shanghai's 2019 Music Festi-val season begins on April 26 with three days of the best indie, dance, rock and electro acts around.

Big names from further afield, including Japan and North America, will take part. The opening day sees Black Rebel Motorcycle Club in Shanghai for the first time in seven years.

This three-day event prom-ises a cracking lineup and a whole host of extra fun to dis-cover and goodies to grab, it's worth getting down for the whole weekend.

Spartacus by The National Academic Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theater of the Republic of Belarus

When: May 3-4, 7:30 pm Where: National Center for the Performing Arts, Beijing

*Spartacus* was premiered by the Kirov Ballet in St. Peters-burg in 1956, and its revised form made its debut in 1968 with the Bolshoi Ballet in Mos-cow.

It was derived from a book by Raffaello Giovagnoli that details events in a Roman slave revolt. Its leader, Spartacus, was a Thracian warrior cap-

tured in battle. The rebellion's high point — literally and figu-ratively — was its seizure of Mount Vesuvius as a strong-hold.

After two years of unrest, the rebellion was finally put down by Marcus Licinius Crassus, and Spartacus fell in battle. Around 6,000 surviving rebels were crucified along the Appian Way.

The National Academic Bol-shoi Opera and Ballet Theater of the Republic of Belarus was created in 1933 as the State Opera and Ballet Theater of Belarus. The opera *Carmen*, starring Belarusian singer Lari-sa Aleksandrovskaya, was the theater's first production.

Today, one of the priorities for the theater is to expand the national repertoire.

Some productions have been on the theater's payroll for more than three decades because of their ongoing popu-larity.

White Water and Dust by Cloud Gate Dance Theater

When: April 18-21, 7:30 pm Where: National Center for the Performing Arts, Beijing

Cloud Gate is one of the old-est-known dances in China. In 1973, choreographer Lin Hwai-min adopted the classical name for the first contemporary dance company — Taiwan's Cloud Gate Dance Theater.

The 24 dancers comprising Cloud Gate received training in various techniques, including meditation, *qigong* (an ancient breathing exercise), martial arts, modern dance, ballet and calligraphy.

Through Lin's choreography the company transforms ancient aesthetics into a thrill-ing and modern celebration of motion.

Cloud Gate has toured exten-sively, with frequent engage-ments at the Next Wave Festival in New York and Sadler's Wells Theater and the Barbican Center in London.

It has also appeared at the Moscow Chekhov International Theater Festival, the Movimen-tos Festival and the Interna-tionalesTanzfest NRW in Germany.

Gabor Boldoczki and Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra

When: May 5, 7:30 pm Where: National Center for the Performing Arts, Beijing

Hungarian Gabor Boldoczki, with his brilliant play, is an exceptional trumpeter of his generation. The international press has called him a trumpet virtuoso.

At the age of 14, he won first prize in the National Trumpet Competition, Hungary. Follow-ing his studies at Leo Weiner Conservatory, the young musi-cian continued at the Franz Liszt Conservatory in Budapest and as a master class student under Professor Reinhold Fried-rich before starting his interna-tional solo career.

By winning the ARD Interna-tional Music Competition in Munich, Boldoczki celebrated his final breakthrough. He then received the Grand Prix de la Ville de Paris in the most distin-guished trumpet competition of all, the third International Maurice Andre Competition in Paris.

# SPORTS

## OLYMPICS

# Olympians will need to rise 'n' shine early in Tokyo

Several events scheduled to beat the summer heat in Japanese capital

TOKYO — For athletes and volunteers, next year's Tokyo Olympics could become known as the Get-Up-Early Games.

Hoping to beat the summer heat in the Japanese capital, organizers said on Tuesday they will start the men's 50-kilometer race walk final at 5:30 am, while the men's and women's marathon finals will go at 6 am.

Marathon swimming will kick off at 7 am, and the men's and women's triathlon start at 7:30 am.

Women's softball has some games scheduled for 9 am, but no men's baseball games will start before noon.

"A 9 am start is early, that's my impression," said Reika Utsugi, head coach of Japan's women's softball team. "But we will have one year for the preparation. Softball cannot decide the times."

Softball and baseball were dropped after the 2008 Olympics, and are appearing because of their popularity in Japan.

The 1964 Tokyo Olympics were held in the fall and did not face heat problems.

Modern Olympics can no longer be held in that time frame, needing to avoid Europe's crowded soccer schedule, and year-round scheduling of baseball, basketball and hockey in the US.

Koji Murofushi, sports director of the Tokyo Games and an Olympic gold medalist in hammer, said organizers had consulted about scheduling with the International Olympic Committee, the governing bodies of the individual sports, and athletes and medical experts.

He said athletes will be able to adapt.

"When we look at the Olympic Games as a whole, of course we need to consider the global audience and adjust and control the overall schedule," Murofushi said.

"Athletes, when they know the schedule in advance, can make

adjustments to their preparations."

As previously announced, the swimming finals will begin at 10:30 am. The swim schedule has nothing to do with the heat and will follow the pattern of the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

The morning schedule in Asia allows North American television to telecast the finals live in prime time in the evening.

American broadcaster NBC in 2011 agreed to pay the IOC \$4.38 billion for TV rights through the 2020 Games. It later agreed to an extension through the 2032 Games, paying the IOC an additional \$7.75 billion.

Organizers say the first gold medal event will be the women's 10-meter air rifle, which will take place on July 25 — the day after the opening ceremony.

Organizers have labeled Aug 8 — the day before the closing ceremony — as "Super Saturday", with about 30 finals, the most of any single day. Finals will include men's basketball, men's soccer and men's baseball.

The most difficult event to schedule might be surfing, which was added to the Tokyo Olympics.

Organizers have blocked out eight days for the event, hoping surf's up for at least four of them. It's a four-day competition.

"The schedule is subject to change depending on the wave conditions," organizers said.

The Olympic basketball tournament has been shortened for the Tokyo Games to cut the number of group matches from five to three for each team.

The International Basketball Federation (FIBA) says the new format will feature three four-team groups in both the men's and women's tournament.

The top two teams in each group are joined in the quarterfinals by the two best third-place teams.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

## Women's wrestling to cap competition

The wrestling tournament at the Tokyo Olympics will end with a women's freestyle gold medal match during six of the seven days of competition in various weight classes.

The Tokyo Organizing Committee announced the move on Tuesday, saying it will help ensure "high attendance" for each day of the tournament. The International Olympic Committee will likely appreciate the move, after it briefly booted the sport in 2013 in part because of concerns over gender equity.

Japan has been the dominant nation in women's wrestling since the sport was added to the 2004 Athens Games.

Japan has won 11 of the 18 gold medals at the last three Olympics.

United World Wrestling president Nenad Lalovic noted the good crowds at the 2016 Rio Games and expects this schedule "will help us reach even more fans and create a positive and energetic environment for all our competitors".

The Greco-Roman discipline will begin on Aug 2, followed by women's and men's freestyle. Women don't wrestle Greco-Roman.

United World Wrestling is the international governing body, headquartered in Switzerland.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

## Ajax ascends



Matthijs de Ligt rises supremely to head home Ajax's second goal in Tuesday's 2-1 victory over Juventus in their Champions League quarterfinal, second-leg match at Allianz Stadium in Turin, Italy. The young Ajax squad knocked out the European giant 3-2 on aggregate to reach the semifinals of the competition for the first time since 1997. It also marks the first time since 2010 that Juve superstar Cristiano Ronaldo has failed to reach the last four, having lifted the trophy in four of the past five years with Real Madrid. ANTONIO CALANNI / AP

## Digest

### ICE HOCKEY

#### China blanks Belgium to avoid relegation

China avoided relegation by defeating Belgium 4-0 in their final game at the IIHF Division II Group A men's world championships in Serbia on Monday.

China gained three points with the win to finish one ahead of last-place Belgium in the six-team tournament.

Zhang Zesen sandwiched a pair of goals around one by Ying Rudi, and Zhang Chengqiang iced the victory with a late marker.

In Monday's other games, Serbia beat Spain 3-2 to top the group and earn promotion to Division I next year, and Croatia edged Australia 2-1.

#### Feisty Jackets send Lightning packing

After one of the best regular seasons in NHL history, the Tampa Bay Lightning made a quick exit from the Stanley Cup playoffs on Tuesday, losing 7-3 to the Columbus Blue Jackets, who swept their best-of-seven Eastern Conference quarterfinal 4-0.

Tampa Bay became the first team in the expansion era, which began in 1967-68, to go winless in the first round of the playoffs after leading the league in points during a regular season that saw the Lightning tie the NHL record for wins with 62.

Meanwhile, the New York Islanders completed a sweep of the Pittsburgh Penguins, winning Game 4 of their Eastern Conference quarterfinal 3-1.

### BADMINTON

#### Wuhan stages test for Military Games

Over 100 Chinese players took part in the recent national competition at Wuhan University's Zhuoer Stadium, which will serve as the badminton venue for the Military World Games in October.

The competition adopted the latest rules approved by the Chinese Badminton Association and the latest regulations published by the World Badminton Federation.

Organizers said the four-day event, covering men's and women's singles and men's, women's and mixed doubles, served to prepare the venue for the upcoming MWG.

The Oct 18-27 Military World Games will welcome over 10,000 athletes and officials from 105 member countries.

## Denver delight



Denver Nuggets guard Jamal Murray reacts after nailing a bucket against the San Antonio Spurs late in the second half of Tuesday's Game 2 of their NBA quarterfinal playoff series in Denver. The Nuggets won 114-105 to knot the series 1-1. AP

Stokes dominated the second quarter with 13 points and helped power Xinjiang to a 50-31 advantage, while young center Fan Ziming was a key component on defense for the Flying Tigers.

It was a tough night for Liaoning, which shot just 38.6 percent from the floor.

## BASKETBALL Stokes puts Tigers in the driver's seat

Jarnell Stokes collected a game-high 31 points and 12 rebounds en route to a double-double as the Xinjiang Flying Tigers grabbed a 3-1 series lead with a 107-81 triumph over the Liaoning Flying Leopards in their best-of-seven Chinese Basketball Association semifinal in Urumqi on Tuesday night.

Abdusalam Abdureshit scored six straight points as Xinjiang started

the game with a 13-2 run.

Stokes dominated the second quarter with 13 points and helped power Xinjiang to a 50-31 advantage, while young center Fan Ziming was a key component on defense for the Flying Tigers.

It was a tough night for Liaoning, which shot just 38.6 percent from the floor.

### BOXING

#### Golovkin eyes third clash with Alvarez

In his first fight since his title loss to Canelo Alvarez last fall, former world middleweight champion Gennady Golovkin will face undefeated Canadian Steve Rolls in June, organizers said on Tuesday.

Golovkin, 37, will fight Rolls on June 8 at New York's Madison Square Garden as he launches a comeback that he hopes will culminate with a third fight against Alvarez later this year.

The hard-hitting Kazakh lost his WBC, IBO and WBA titles to Alvarez by majority decision in their

September rematch in Las Vegas, one year after they fought to a controversial draw.

Golovkin is 38-1-1 with 34 KOs, while the Toronto-based Rolls, 35, is 19-0 with 10 KOs.

### TENNIS

#### Djokovic labors to notch milestone win

Top-seeded Novak Djokovic was made to sweat for his 850th tour-level win by overcoming Philipp Kohlschreiber of Germany in the second round of the ATP Monte Carlo Masters on Tuesday.

Facing the opponent that beat him at last month's BNP Paribas Open, two-time former champion Djokovic triumphed 6-3, 4-6, 6-4 in two hours and 36 minutes, setting up a third-round clash with Diego Schwartzman or Taylor Fritz.

"I had ups and downs and felt a bit rusty on the court. Hopefully I can play slightly better in the next round, because if I want to go deep in the tournament, I definitely have to up my game," the world No 1 pointed out.

### BASEBALL

#### Paxton punches out a dozen Red Sox

The man they call 'Big Maple' was on fire for the New York Yankees on Tuesday night.

Canadian right-hander James Paxton notched 12 strikeouts in eight innings in his first stab at baseball's biggest rivalry as the Yankees routed the Boston Red Sox 8-0.

Paxton (2-2) pitched two-hit ball, walking one and going to just two three-ball counts in a game that took only two hours, 23 minutes.

Mike Tauchman hit his first major league homer and drove in four runs, and Clint Frazier and Gleyber Torres also went deep for the Yankees. New York had dropped five of six and is 7-9 a year after winning 100 games.

XINHUA — AGENCIES

## Scoreboard

### BASEBALL

Results of the MLB games on Tuesday (home team in CAPS):

NY YANKEES 8 Boston 0

Pittsburgh 5 DETROIT 3 (10 innings)

TAMPA BAY 4 Baltimore 2

Chicago Cubs 4 MIAMI 0

PHILADELPHIA 14 NY Mets 3

San Francisco 7 WASHINGTON 3

Arizona 9 ATLANTA 6

Toronto 6 MINNESOTA 5

MILWAUKEE 8 St. Louis 4

TEXAS 5 LA Angels 0

CHICAGO WHITE SOX 5 Kansas City 1

Colorado 8 SAN DIEGO 2

Houston 9 OAKLAND 1

Cleveland 4 SEATTLE 2

LA DODGERS 6 Cincinnati 1

### BASKETBALL

Results of the NBA playoff first-round games on Tuesday (home team in CAPS):

TORONTO 111 Orlando 82

(Best-of-seven series is level at 1-1)

DENVER 114 San Antonio 105

(Best-of-seven series is level at 1-1)

PORTLAND 114 Oklahoma City 94

(Portland leads best-of-seven series )

### NBA postseason leaders

#### As of Tuesday

#### Scoring

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Curry, GOL	2	19	16	67	33.5
Leonard, TOR	2	25	5	62	31.0
Williams, LAC	2	24	10	61	30.5
Lillard, POR	2	19	12	59	29.5
Harden, HOU	1	11	3	29	29.0
McCollum, POR	2	21	9	57	28.5
George, OKC	2	19	9	53	26.5
Harrell, LAC	2	20	11	51	25.5
DeRozan, SAN	2	17	15	49	24.5
Antetokounmpo, MIL	1	9	5	24	24.0
Embiid, PHL	2	13	19	45	22.5
Durant, GOL	2	13	17	44	22.0
Gobert, UTA	1	8	6	22	22.0
Butler, PHL	2	14	14	43	21.5
Harris, DEN	2	17	5	43	21.5
Siakam, TOR	2	20	3	43	21.5
Kennard, DET	1	8	1	21	21.0
Russell, BRO	2	16	5	42	21.0
Murray, DEN	2	16	7	41	20.5
Irving, BOS	1	6	6	20	20.0

#### FG Percentage

	FG	FGA	PCT
Looney, GOL	9	10	.900

Harrell, LAC	20	24	.833
Faried, HOU	4	5	.800
Gobert, UTA	8	10	.800
Noel, OKC	8	11	.727
Adams, OKC	15	22	.682
Connaughton, MIL4	6	6	.667
Thomas, DET	4	6	.667
White, SAN	14	21	.667
Favors, UTA	5	8	.625

#### Rebounds

	G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Antetokounmpo, MIL	1	3	14	17	17.0
Jokic, DEN	2	6	21	27	13.5
Embiid, PHL	2	7	18	25	12.5
Capela, HOU	1	3	9	12	12.0
Drummond, DET	1	2	10	12	12.0
Gobert, UTA	1	5	7	12	12.0
Kanter, POR	2	7	16	23	11.5
Horford, BOS	1	0	11	11	11.0
DeRozan, SAN	2	4	15	19	9.5
Siakam, TOR	2	5	14	19	9.5

#### Assists

	G	AST	AVG
Jokic, DEN	2	22	11.0
Westbrook, OKC	2	21	10.5
Harden, HOU	1	10	10.0

Williams, LAC	2	20	10.0
Green, GOL	2	16	8.0
Lowry, TOR	2	15	7.5
Simmons, PHL	2	15	7.5
Brown, MIL	1	7	7.0
Irving, BOS	1	7	7.0
Paul, HOU	1	7	7.0

### ICE HOCKEY

Results of the NHL playoff first-round games on Tuesday (home team in CAPS):

COLUMBUS 7 Tampa Bay 3

(Columbus wins best-of-seven series 4-0)

NV Islanders 3 PITTSBURGH 1

(Islanders wins best-of-seven series 4-0)

Winnipeg 2 ST. LOUIS 1 (OT)

(Best-of-seven series is level at 2-2)

VEGAS 5 San Jose 0

(Vegas leads best-of-seven series 3-1)

### SOCCER

#### UEFA Champions League

Results on Tuesday:

Semifinals, second leg

At Barcelona, Spain

Barcelona (ESP) 3 (Messi 16, Coutinho 61) Manchester United (ENG) 0

Barcelona wins 4-0 on aggregate

At Turin, Italy

Juventus (ITA) 1 (Ronaldo 28) Ajax (NED) 2 (Van de Beek 34, De Ligt 67)

Ajax wins 3-2 on aggregate

#### English Premier League

Result on Tuesday:

Brighton 0 Cardiff 2 (Mendez-Laing 22, Morrison 50)

	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Liverpool	34	26	7	1	77	20	85
Man City	33	27	2	4	86	22	83
Tottenham	33	22	1	10	64	34	67
Arsenal	33	20	6	7	66	40	66
Chelsea	34	20	6	8	57	36	66
Man United	33	19	7	7	63	44	64
Leicester	34	14	5	15	46	45	47
Wolverhampton	33	13	8	12	41	42	47
Everton	34	13	7	14	46	44	46
Watford	33	13	7	13	47	48	46
West Ham	34	12	6	16	42	52	42
Bournemouth	34	12	5	17	49	61	41
Crystal Palace	34	11	6	17	40	46	39
Burnley	34	11	6	17	42	60	39
Newcastle	34	10	8	16	32	43	38

### TENNIS

ATP Monte Carlo Masters

Results on Tuesday (x-denotes seeding):

1st rd

Taylor Fritz (USA) bt Jo-Wilfried Tsonga (FRA) 6-4, 2-0 retired; Cameron Norrie (GBR) bt Adrian Panarino (FRA) 6-4, 6-3; Pierre-Hugues Herbert (FRA) bt Fernando Verdasco (ESP) 6-7 (3/7), 7-6 (9/7), 6-4; Guido Pella (ARG) bt Marin Cilic (CRO x7) 6-3, 5-7, 6-1; Marco Cecchinato (ITA x11) bt Stan Wawrinka (SUI) 0-6, 7-5, 6-3.

SPORTS

ATHLETICS

Setting a new gold standard

Team China looking to dominate at upcoming Asian Championships

By SHI FUTIAN  
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Next week's Asian Athletics Championships in Doha will serve as a test run for Team China ahead of October's world championships in the Qatari capital.

Team China is comprised of 132 athletes and officials for the April 21-24 tournament. A support team of 26 trainers, sports scientists and medical personnel is already in Doha, getting acclimated for the continental challenge.

"To become a world athletics powerhouse, the first step is become an Asian athletics powerhouse," Yu Hongchen, deputy president of the Chinese Athletic Association, said at Wednesday's mobilization meeting in Beijing.

"Through the winter training and tournaments earlier this year, some of our athletes have made breakthroughs. However, many of those competitions were in China and the athletes were surrounded by familiar faces and eating familiar foods. It's a challenge to compete in Doha, where the weather is very different."

Maintaining a competitive edge at the Asian Championships won't be an easy task.

"The landscape has already changed from being a competition among China, Japan and South Korea to the growing rivalry between China and West Asian countries," said Gesangciren, coach of Chinese long-distance runner Duobujie, who won bronze at last year's Asian Games in Jakarta, Indonesia.

"China and Bahrain were tied for first place in athletics gold medals at the Asian Games. We were called the strongest athletics country only because our final medals total was the highest. We have to keep a clear mind and be confident of beating any opponent."

Two of Team China's brightest stars are sprinters Su Bingtian, who holds the Asian record of 9.91 seconds in the 100m, and Xie Zhenye, who also broke the 10-second barrier with a personal best of 9.97. They will not compete in the 100m sprint next week, but will team up in the 4x100m relay.



World champion shot putter Gong Lijiao takes the mission oath with China's athletics team on Wednesday in Beijing, ahead of next week's Asian Athletics Championships in Doha. SHI FUTIAN / CHINA DAILY

While Su has shown great momentum this season by claiming golds on the European circuit, Xie has been sidelined by injuries since last July.

"I haven't competed in a major international tournament since last summer," said Xie, who is China's biggest threat in the 200m.

"I'm eager to compete, but I'm still a little nervous. This year, without doubt, the world championship is our priority. In terms of the 200m, my goal at the Asian Championships is to secure my ticket to the worlds.

"Personally speaking, I want to return to the highest podium this season, but I know there are many competitive runners. Compared with last season, I'm now more stable ... and I had some solid training while recovering from my injuries."

Another Team China star is shot putter Gong Lijiao, who bagged gold at the 2017 worlds in London and maintained her momentum through the 2018 season, notching Diamond League victories in Shanghai and Monaco, followed by Asian Games gold in August and a victory at the IAAF Continental Cup in the Czech Republic a month later.

"I'm a veteran on the team so I feel that I'm shouldering more responsibility," said the 30-year-old, who won her first world championship medal in 2009 at Berlin.

"I'm now competing with myself. Along with winning gold at the Asian Championships, I want to reach my goal of throwing between 19.30 and 19.50 meters.

"Winning at the 2017 worlds made me more confident, so hopefully I can defend my title in Doha."

As the only Chinese athlete who has set an Asian record this season, javelin thrower Lyu Huihui is also ready for the challenge in Doha.

"Setting the record was quite unexpected for me," said Lyu, who beat her own mark of 67.69m with a throw of 67.72m at last week's National Track and Field Grand Prix in Huangshi, Hubei province.

"I'm pretty relaxed for the Asian Championships. I just want to show my strength and seize the opportunity on every throw. There's still room for improvement."

BASKETBALL



Han Xu trains in Los Angeles ahead of being selected by the New York Liberty in the second round of the recent WNBA draft. The 19-year-old center is a member of China's national team. XINHUA

Han confident of conquering WNBA

By SUN XIAOCHEN  
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Teenage WNBA draftee Han Xu believes she has what it takes to stand tall in the world's most competitive women's pro league.

With a versatile skill set that fits the modern game, the 6-foot-9 center believes her commitment to adapt to a challenging new life will define her future in the league.

"Besides playing hard, I think there will be a lot of off-the-court stuff for me to try to get used to in the United States. This is probably the true challenge for me," Han told China Daily at NBA China's Beijing office on Tuesday.

"I am more excited than worried," added the 19-year-old, who was selected by the New York Liberty in the second round (14th overall) of the WNBA draft earlier this month.

"I can speak some English to handle most of the daily communication. I like the food in the US and I can sleep like a baby on a plane, so road trips won't be a problem.

"I'm ready for whatever happens during this adventure. I am all in."

Han, a member of the national team, was just the second Chinese drafted into the league after retired center Zheng Haixia was selected by the Los Angeles Sparks (16th overall) in 1997.

Three other Chinese players — Sui Feifei, Miao Lijie and Chen Nan, all retired — previously played in the WNBA.

A month-long stay in the US to prepare for the draft enlightened Han on what to expect in the pro ranks.

"The effort they put into details

I can speak some English to handle most of the daily communication ... I'm ready for whatever happens during this adventure. I am all in."

Han Xu, on expectations for her WNBA career

to make training, nutrition and physical conditioning more effective, the work ethic and the discipline off the court really impressed me," said Han, who worked out with an NBA-caliber trainer at the University of California Los Angeles ahead of the draft.

Han had her body's strengths and weaknesses analyzed by a 360-degree motion camera, underwent liquid nitrogen treatment to relieve muscle inflammation, added 3-point shooting to her four-hour daily training regimen and even

took a financial management course arranged by the league for all rookies.

So far it all seems fun for Han, but she knows everything comes down to how she performs on the court.

"My main goal is definitely to prove that I belong here and I will build my own style of play," she said.

Graduated from the renowned basketball program at Tsinghua University High School in 2017, Han joined the Xinjiang Tianshan

Bayi duo staying in China

Chinese players Li Meng and Sun Mengran, who were courted by Women's National Basketball Association clubs earlier this month, announced on Tuesday they will not play in the WNBA this year.

After Chinese center Han Xu was selected by the New York Liberty in the second round of the April 9 draft, the Bayi Kylin duo of Li and Sun also received offers. Li was offered a contract by the Minnesota Lynx, while Sun was drafted by the Atlanta

Dream.

However, both players said they have decided against playing in the United States this year. They are preparing for the upcoming CISM Military World Games and the qualifying tournament for next year's Summer Olympics in Tokyo.

The Chinese women's national team will compete in the Oct 18-27 CISM Military World Games in Wuhan, Hubei Province.

XINHUA

SOCCER

Masterful Mueller cementing his name in Bayern history

By XINHUA in Berlin

The name Mueller has become synonymous with goals and glory at Bayern Munich through the decades.

From 1964-79, Gerd Mueller earned god-like status at the club by scoring 365 times in 427 league matches.

Such was his effectiveness in front of goal, television and radio commentators invariably uttered two words with deadpan certainty as the ball landed at the striker's feet: "Mueller, goal."

In the 2018-19 Bundesliga season, another Mueller, Thomas, is playing a vital role as Bayern bids to keep Borussia Dortmund's hands off the trophy and win a seventh straight top-flight title and 29th in total.

The stats show how important the 29-year-old remains for his side.

Whenever the former Germany international scores, Bayern does not lose. The Bavarians have won 82 and drawn five times in the 87 games in which Mueller has netted.

And while his namesake was primarily a master poacher, Thomas Mueller has arguably more to his game.

The 2014 World Cup winner is also a creator of goals, providing four assists in his past five league games as Bayern overtook Dortmund at the top of the standings by a point with five games left.

"You just can't stop him as defenders don't seem to get hold of him," Bayern coach Niko Kovac said after last Sunday's 4-1 win at Fortuna Duesseldorf.

"He seems to be everywhere at the same time, and that makes him invaluable for us."



Thomas Mueller fires toward goal for Bayern Munich during last Sunday's 4-1 victory at Fortuna Duesseldorf, which lifted the Bavarian giant to the top of the Bundesliga standings. AP

It's been far from clear sailing for Mueller this season, though. The forward was relegated to the bench

by Kovac early in the campaign and was blamed by some for Bayern's Champions League elimination to

Liverpool after missing the last-16 loss because of his red card against Ajax.

But the native Bavarian has rediscovered his best form just in time to salvage his team's season.

With Mueller on the pitch, Bayern is scoring more as the results of its last six league games bear testament to: 5-1, 6-0, 6-0, 1-1, 5-0 and 4-1.

Since 2014, Mueller has had only season in which he has tallied more goals than assists.

"I know exactly what makes strikers happy as I am a striker myself," he said of his knack for supplying others with chances.

Robert Lewandowski describes himself as the "best customer" of that "delivery service."

"Thomas is a generally forward-looking performer and always in motion," said the Polish striker, who has scored eight goals in his last six

league matches.

"With him around, we always have a new force in the box, and I don't have to carry all of the defenders on my shoulders."

Serge Gnabry has also been a big beneficiary, with nine of the former Arsenal forward's goals laid on by Mueller.

Bayern chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge reckons it's no coincidence that Mueller's spike in form came hot on the heels of his controversial axing from the German national team by coach Joachim Loew last month.

"He wants to prove he's still reaching the highest standards in football," said Rummenigge.

Mueller's next chance to show Loew made a mistake comes at home to Werder Bremen on Saturday, with Dortmund traveling to Freiburg on Sunday.